

# Another episode of the riveting duel primed to unfold

India will strive to maintain its total dominance against Pakistan; the weather, oscillating between sunshine and drizzle, may have a say



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR  
MANCHESTER

Match-preview days for sports scribes are all about quelling the nerves, figuring out the venue's practice pitches where the teams train and identifying the press box. Just as some Indian cricket writers trudged into Old Trafford, the setting for Sunday's high-octane World Cup game involving India and Pakistan, a car slowed down on the adjacent road.

## Lingering confusion

The youngster at the steering-wheel leaned towards the window, rolled down the glass and said: "Whether we win the World Cup or not, doesn't matter, but please win tomorrow's game." Soon he merged with Saturday's morning traffic but confusion lingered. Did he speak in Hindi or Urdu? There was a Punjabi inflexion too in his pronunciation but it is a language spoken on either side of the border. So, was he Indian or Pakistani? And did he



Happy frame: Virat Kohli will have every reason to be upbeat going into the Pakistan game. • AP

realise the nationality of the gentlemen he spoke to? The absurdity of the situation is revelatory. After the Radcliffe Line cleaved the two countries apart in 1947, historical angst, perceived

slights, sibling rivalry and hyper-nationalism have all combined to nearly scythe a shared cultural umbilical cord. The youth's utterance has another import, living as he does in an England city

where the sub-continental diaspora has a solid presence. If the squad he roots for wins, then he gets the bragging rights over his friends from the rival nation. And as these high-strung

## 'It will rain at 3 p.m. during the match'

Local cab driver's weather prediction

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR  
MANCHESTER

Exactly at 10.37 a.m., lumbering clouds parted ways and through the gap, the sun, glorious in its light and warmth, streaked in. Another episode of the fickle English summer was back in play at Old Trafford while Virat Kohli's men trained here on Saturday.

Rishabh Pant, who joined the squad as a stand-by, wore multiple layers of apparel and heated his gloves with the thud of the white ball delivered by either Jasprit Bumrah or Yuzvendra Chahal. Just as the bowlers wheeled their arms over, albeit gently, the weather gods wavered between bright luminescence and

brooding darkness and that remains the backdrop for Sunday's much-anticipated World Cup clash between India and Pakistan.

It rained here late on Friday night, an insistent shower drenching commuters and cascading down ancient homes and dilapidated factories. The forecast for D-Day is: "light rain showers and a moderate breeze."

The lone relief is that it doesn't look as grim as it did at Nottingham where the game involving India and New Zealand was washed out on Thursday. But ominously, as a group of cricket writers reached the venue, the cab driver said: "Trust me, it will rain at 3 p.m., during the match."

emotions swirled around the joust, the teams attempted to silence the surround-sound. India has a historical grip in the World Cups, having won all its six clashes with the neighbour. Pakistan, mean-

while, is referring to its '2017 ICC Champions Trophy' notes when it defeated the arch-rival by 180 runs in the final at the Oval.

The weather too has been phlegmatic, oscillating bet-

ween sunshine and drizzle. Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said that the pitch seemed brown but the existing atmospheric conditions might force the outfits to reinforce their respective pace-quotient. It remains to be seen if Virat Kohli would prefer Mohammed Shami over Kuldeep Yadav.

Following Shikhar Dhawan's left-thumb injury, India will step in with K.L. Rahul and Rohit Sharma atop the batting tree. Since a middle-order slot opens up due to Rahul's elevation, both Dinesh Karthik and Vijay Shankar are in the reckoning. Kohli's resources on display, in the games against South Africa and Australia, seemed turbo-charged. Even if the washed-out Trent Bridge tussle against New Zealand was a dampener, the Men in Blue are better placed unlike a Pakistan that reiterated its perennial adjective: 'mercurial'.

Sarfraz Ahmed's men slumped against the West Indies, upset a fancied England, fumed over a washed-out fixture against Sri Lanka and then succumbed to Australia. Still, this is a unit that includes robust batsmen like Imam-ul-Haq, Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam and Mohammad Hafeez, and also has the experience of a Shoaib Malik to rely upon even though he hasn't fired yet. And in the bowling

ranks, Mohammad Amir and Wahab Riaz can test the best. The decks are cleared, Old Trafford will be packed and a massive television audience would further enhance the contest's halo.



**The teams (from):**  
**India:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, M.S. Dhoni, K.L. Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Hardik Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Kedrik Pandya, Vijay Shankar, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav and Shikhar Dhawan.  
**Pakistan:** Sarfraz Ahmed (Capt.), Asif Ali, Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Sohail, Hasan Ali, Imad Wasim, Shoaib Malik, Wahab Riaz, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Hasnain, Shadab Khan and Shaheen Afridi.  
**Umpires:** Marais Erasmus and Bruce Oxenford; **Third umpire:** Joel Wilson; **Match referee:** Ranjan Madugalle.  
Match starts at 3 p.m. IST.

## Our focus is on what we need to do: Kohli

The mindset of the player is different from that of the fans, says the Indian skipper

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR  
MANCHESTER

The cricketing globe may be in a tizzy over Sunday's World Cup clash between India and Pakistan but Virat Kohli preferred to treat it as just another contest. "A professional approach to the game is most important. We can't get too emotional. Obviously, the mindset of the player is always going to be different from that of the fans. You can't mix the two," the Indian skipper said in a press conference here on Saturday.

## Clinical display

Kohli emphasised that he would prefer to focus on his team rather than worry about the opposition's strengths: "In the first two games that we played, we had very clinical performances. We just focused on exactly what we needed to do. We are not focusing too much on what the opposition will bring to the table. If we play well as a team, we can beat any side."

Asked about the chatter

**If pace becomes an important option, then we will look to explore that**

KOHLI

within the dressing room and if there is added pressure since the opponent is Pakistan, Kohli replied: "We are a top side in the world because of the cricket that we played. Our focus is absolutely that. So the conversation in the changing room hasn't changed at all from the time we came to England and until now."

Based on the prevailing conditions that hint at rain, Kohli might effect some changes in his playing eleven: "We can't be rigid because if the conditions are different, then we will have to think of different combinations. If pace becomes an important option, then we will look to explore that."

## Lighter tone

Kohli reiterated that all his players, including the fast bowlers, are in rhythm despite inclement weather af-



Getting ready: The Indian players attend a training session ahead of the crucial match. • AP

fecting a game and some practice sessions. Soon the media interaction acquired a lighter tone when Kohli was probed about his most tense and funny moments while playing against Pakistan.

The Indian captain grinned and said: "Tense

was the 2009 Champions Trophy at South Africa, where Yuvi (Yuvraj Singh) fractured a finger. I was frown in and in two days time I was playing against Pakistan at Centurion. I hadn't experienced anything like that before, and I played a very

bad shot. I couldn't sleep until six in the morning. As for the funny moment, it happened during the 2011 World Cup match at Mohali. There was an incident involving Shahid Afridi and Wahab Riaz. I can't really elaborate but it was quite funny."

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MANCHESTER

Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur believes that Sunday's World Cup game against India presents a glorious opportunity for many of his wards to reiterate their credentials. "I don't want to say it's the biggest rivalry in sport, but I saw some stats which said the soccer World Cup final attracted 1.6 billion viewers and tomorrow is likely to get 1.5 billion. It doesn't get bigger than that. I am telling our players in the dressing room, 'you do something incredible, you will be remembered forever'," Arthur told the media here on Saturday.

## The potential

Arthur felt that if Pakistan performed to potential, it could defeat any opposition: "We haven't put the perfect game together yet. We have been good with the bat, been okay with the ball and okay in the field. If we put the perfect game together, we can beat everybody,



Scores to settle: Sarfraz Ahmed and Hasan Ali will be keen to improve Pakistan's World Cup record against India. • REUTERS

and we are confident of that."

The overwhelming theme linked to Pakistan through this World Cup has been its ability to scale stratospheric heights one day and then plumb the depths over the next 24 hours. Arthur, though, stressed that too much is being read into the preceding results: "Through a World Cup, when you are playing nine games, you are not going to win every game. Getting that momentum towards the back-end

of the tournament is really important and it's time we start that."

Looking back at the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy final in which Mohammad Amir prised out the Indian top-order, Arthur hinted that it is a vulnerability his team would love to exploit: "Without wanting to harp too much, that was two years ago, but when you get into the Indian top-order, you can create a little bit of havoc. That's something that we will try to work on."

## No clear favourite: Zaheer Abbas

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MANCHESTER

Former Pakistan skipper Zaheer Abbas believes that India, with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in its ranks, has the best batting unit in the world. However, he feels that when India takes on Pakistan on Sunday, there won't be any clear favourite.

"If Pakistan wins the game at Old Trafford, the final will be between India and Pakistan, trust me," the 71-year-old told *Sportstar*. Excerpts

India and Pakistan face off after nine long months. What are your thoughts on Sunday's fixture?

It is a very big game, perhaps the match of the tournament. I just hope we have a very good game. Pakistan has never won against India in the World Cup, but let's not forget there was a time when India too lost a lot of games against us. Sometimes, your team is good, and there are times when your team goes through a rough phase. These things happen and that's the beauty of the game.

India looks more balanced than Pakistan...

India has the best batting line-up in the world. Because of the IPL, the players have become more mature. Of course, your captain Virat and opening batsman Rohit Sharma are the best in the world. Rohit can play so many strokes, he is such a skilful player. It is a treat to watch both Virat and Rohit. India has made a lot of big scores, but then, in this World Cup, Pakistan too has scored 340-odd runs. So, it also has the potential.

Apart from the Champions Trophy final, things have tilted India's way

Selection plays a role and experience counts a lot. In the big matches, a lot also depends on what you decide - bat first or bowl. If you have a strong batting line-up, you

would like to chase. That was the case before with India, with so many star batsmen in its ranks. But now, its bowling unit has also improved. I think this will be a game of nerves.

Will Dhawan's absence be a concern for India?

Dhawan was not in form initially before he scored a hundred against Australia. India would have ideally loved to take advantage of the left-right opening combination (Dhawan-Rohit), but then, K.L. Rahul is also very good.

Who is the favourite?

When Pakistan is playing against India, you cannot predict a clear favourite. This match will prove who is going to win the tournament.

## My money is on India



BRIAN LARA  
SELECT DUGOUT CORNER

Growing up in the West Indies, our main rival was England, because of our historical background. But the India-Pakistan clash is on another level - it is simply amazing. When I was a player, I was very envious of the intensity that India-Pakistan matches generated. Of course, there is a chance that the fixture could be affected by rain. All the stakeholders - the ICC, sponsors, spectators, and players - have been stung by rain disruptions.

In a sport like tennis, when the rain stops, play begins. Cricket has to get to that point. You have to build stadiums in such a way that you are certain to get play after rain stops.

If rain stays away, my money is on India maintaining their winning World Cup re-

cord against Pakistan. India is strong in all departments.

Jasprit Bumrah is the best limited-overs fast bowler in the world, and Bhuvneshwar Kumar is very good too. And then they have two brilliant spinners in Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav.

## Dhawan injury

It's sad to see that Shikhar Dhawan is out with an injury. With him in the team, you had a strong No. 4 in K.L. Rahul. In my opinion, Rahul is the most technically-gifted batsman in the Indian team. In the event of a top-order collapse, Rahul

can repair the damage. If the top-order clicks, you can move Hardik Pandya up to No. 4 to get quick runs.

The batting-order was perfectly placed before Dhawan's injury. Nevertheless, India has batting match-winners all the way down to No. 7. If I'm in the opposition team meeting, I would say, "My gosh! India's batting problems start only at No.8".

These are early days in the World Cup, but I am yet to see any weakness in the Indian team.

(Tune into *Select Dugout on Star Sports Select 1 on India Match Days and Sundays*)

## Where they stand

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR
Australia	5	4	1	0	8	0.812
New Zealand	4	3	0	1	7	2.163
England	4	3	1	0	6	1.557
India	3	2	0	1	5	0.539
Sri Lanka	5	1	2	2	4	-1.778
West Indies	4	1	2	1	3	0.666
South Africa	5	1	3	1	3	-0.208
Bangladesh	4	1	2	1	3	-0.714
Pakistan	4	1	2	1	3	-1.796
Afghanistan	4	0	4	0	0	-1.638

\*Till South Africa-Afghanistan match on June 15

## STAT SPHERE



■ With 313 runs, **Sachin Tendulkar** is the leading scorer in India-Pakistan contests at the World Cup. He is the only player to figure in five clashes, a record.

■ The former India legend is also the only player to win **three Man-of-the-Match** awards - in 1992, 2003 and 2011.

■ **Virat Kohli** (107 in 2015) and **Saeed Anwar** (101 in 2003) are the only batsmen to have scored centuries

■ **Venkatesh Prasad** (5/27 in 1999), **Wahab Riaz** (5/46 in 2011) & **Sohal Khan** (5/55 in 2015) are the three bowlers with five-fors. The haul against Pakistan is Prasad's best in ODIs and in the rivalry too. He also leads the bowling charts with eight wickets

■ The two have met at every stage of the competition except in the final (group stages in 1992, 2003, 2015), quarterfinals (1996), Super Six (1999) and semifinals (2011)

■ Mohammad Amir returned career-best ODI figures of five

for 30 in Pakistan's most recent match, the 41-run loss to Australia in Taunton. However, he has failed to take a wicket in four of six previous ODIs against India

■ Kohli is 57 runs away from becoming the ninth player to score 11,000 ODI runs, Sachin Tendulkar holds the record for the quickest to reach the milestone (276 innings). Kohli has played just 221 innings so far

■ Rohit Sharma has made scores of 95, 56, 122 not out and 57 in his last four ODI innings, the longest run of 50-plus scores in his career in this format. If he manages another 50 on Sunday, he will become the fourth Indian batsman to do so (Tendulkar and Kohli (twice), and Rahane)

■ Imam-ul-Haq has an ODI average of 57.2 (1,486 runs). Among players who have scored 1,000-plus runs, only two players - Ryan ten Doeschate (67) and Kohli (59.5) - have a better average

**HIGHEST TOTAL:** 300/7 by India in 2015. Lowest: 173 by Pakistan in 1992



# Skipper Finch punches big

Australia thumps Sri Lanka; Karunaratne's 97 in vain

**WORLD CUP**  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON

Skipper Aaron Finch stroked his way to a majestic century as defending champion Australia crushed Sri Lanka by 87 runs in their World Cup fixture here on Saturday.

Finch forged two crucial partnerships – 80 with his opening partner David Warner (26) and 173 with Steve Smith (73 off 59) for the third wicket – in his 132-ball 153 knock. It was his 14th ODI hundred which was laced with 15 fours and five sixes.

Glenn Maxwell then provided the late charge with an unbeaten 25-ball 46 as Australia posted a challenging 334 for seven.

Chasing the total, Sri Lanka was 115 for no loss at one

**Next assignment**  
**AUSTRALIA**  
June 20 vs Bangladesh, Trent Bridge, 3 p.m.  
**SRI LANKA**  
June 21 vs England, Headingley, 3 p.m.



**Launcher:** Finch's belligerent ton set up Australia's win. • AP

stage but it squandered the superb start to be dismissed for 247 in 45.5 overs. Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (97) was the top scorer while his opening partner Kusal Perera (52) also scored a fifty.

Mitchell Starc took four wickets. This is Australia's fourth win in five matches. Sri Lanka, which came in-

## SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS SRI LANKA

**AUSTRALIA**  
David Warner b Dhananjaya 26 (48b, 2x4), Aaron Finch c Karunaratne b Udana 153 (132b, 15x4, 5x6), Usman Khawaja c Udana b Dhananjaya 10 (20b, 1x4), Steve Smith b Malinga 73 (59b, 7x4, 1x6), Glenn Maxwell (not out) 46 (25b, 5x4, 1x6), Shaun Marsh c Siriwardana b Udana 3 (9b), Alex Carey run out 4 (3b), Pat Cummins run out 0 (1b), Mitchell Starc (not out) 5 (4b); Extras (lb-4, nb-1, w-9): 14; Total (for seven wickets, in 50 overs): 334.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-80 (Warner, 16.4 overs), 2-100 (Khawaja, 22.6), 3-273 (Finch, 42.4), 4-278 (Smith, 43.3), 5-310 (Marsh, 46.6), 6-317 (Carey, 48.1), 7-320 (Cum-

**SRI LANKA BOWLING**  
Malinga 10-1-61-1, Pradeep 10-0-88-0, Udana 10-0-57-2, Thisara Perera 10-0-67-0, Dhananjaya 8-0-40-2, Siriwardana 2-0-17-0.

**SRI LANKA**  
Dimuth Karunaratne c Maxwell b Richardson 97 (108b, 9x4), Kusal Perera b Starc 52 (36b, 5x4, 1x6), Lahiru Thirimanne c Carey b Behrendorff 16 (26b, 1x4), Kusal Mendis c Carey b Starc 30 (37b, 2x6), Angelo Mathews c Carey b Cummins 9 (11b, 2x4), Milinda Siriwardana b Starc 4 (4b), Thisara Perera c Warner b Starc 7 (3b, 1x6), Dhananjaya de Silva (not out) 16 (30b, 2x4), Isuru Udana c Finch b Richardson 8 (8b, 1x4), Lasith Malinga c Khawaja b Richardson 1 (5b), Nuwan Pradeep c Carey b Cummins 0 (7b); Extras (lb-2, w-6): 8; Total (in 45.5 overs): 247.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-115 (Kusal Perera, 15.3 overs), 2-153 (Thirimanne, 23.5), 3-186 (Karunaratne, 32.1), 4-205 (Mathews, 35.4), 5-209 (Siriwardana, 36.2), 6-217 (Thisara Perera, 36.6), 7-222 (Kusal Mendis, 38.1), 8-236 (Udana, 39.6), 9-237 (Malinga, 41.4).

**AUSTRALIA BOWLING**  
Starc 10-0-55-4, Cummins 7-5-0-38-2, Behrendorff 9-0-59-1, Richardson 9-1-47-3, Maxwell 10-0-46-0.

**Toss:** Sri Lanka.  
**MoM:** Aaron Finch.  
Australia won by 87 runs.

# India takes giant step towards Tokyo 2020

A complete performance sees the host hammer South Africa 5-1 in the summit clash

**HSF**  
UTHRA GANESAN  
BHUBANESWAR

India reserved its best for the last, registering a comprehensive 5-1 victory against South Africa in the title clash of the Hockey Series Finals here on Saturday with a performance that was far removed from the fumbling start it had made.

The all-round show would not just be a relief for the team and coach Graham Reid, but also a major step forward in its quest for an Olympic spot. The host dominated every department against a side that had fought its way into the final.

Despite the scoreline not being as massive as in previous games, it was a far more polished display from India which took charge from the opening minute and never relented.

For Reid, that would perhaps be the biggest takeaway from the outing.

India pressed hard all 60 minutes, not leaving any gaps in the defence. It opened up space in every area of the field – all this, without losing its structure



**Dazzling display:** The Indian hockey team, which proved too strong for South Africa in the final, seen with Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik. • BISWARANJAN ROU

or discipline.

The players advanced to receive the ball instead of waiting for it and kept possession without rushing for the goal.

Despite taking the lead as early as the second minute, when Varun Kumar struck a perfectly placed shot in the bottom left corner through Rassie Pieterse's legs off India's first penalty corner, the team did not lose control.

Manpreet Singh, named Player-of-the-tournament, was impressive as always in the middle and the flanks, while Vivek Prasad was brilliant in holding up the all-important centre-half position every time he got the responsibility. It was a delight to watch the Indians crowd the

um. Although India was the favourite, South Africa was a tricky opponent. It got its first chance in the 53rd minute – two back-to-back PCs – and struck its only goal.

**Japan pips USA**  
Earlier, Japan finished third with a 4-2 win against USA in a dramatic playoff that saw three goals being scored in the final 90 seconds. USA began the scoring but got the equaliser in the 59th minute to make it 2-2.

With the game heading for a shootout, USA decided to remove its goalkeeper and Kenta Tanaka scored twice in the final minute.

**The results:**  
**Final:** India 5 (Harmanpreet Singh 2, Varun Kumar 2, Vivek Prasad) bt South Africa 1 (Richard Pautz); **3-4 placings:** Japan 4 (Kenta Tanaka 2, Kazuma Murata, Yoshiki Kirishita) bt USA 2 (Aki Kaeppler 2).

**Special awards: Player-of-the-tournament:** Manpreet Singh (India); **Best junior player:** Vivek Prasad (India); **Best goalkeeper:** Jonathan Klages (USA); **Top scorers:** Harmanpreet Singh (India), Varun Kumar (India) and Semen Matkovskiy (Russia) – six each.

# A big win for South Africa

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
CARDIFF

South Africa took its own sweet time and still managed to beat Afghanistan by nine wickets with almost 20 overs to spare in a rain-affected match here on Saturday.

After leg-spinner Imran Tahir snared four wickets to trigger Afghanistan's dramatic batting collapse – it was shot out for 125 in 34.1 overs – South African opener Hashim Amla took 83 balls to score a sedate 41 to shepherd his side to victory.

The South Africans should have won without losing a wicket were it not for a catch taken out of

**Next assignment**  
**AFGHANISTAN**  
June 18 vs England, Old Trafford, 3 p.m.  
**SOUTH AFRICA**  
June 19 vs New Zealand, Edgbaston, 3 p.m.

nowhere by Mohammed Nabi at midwicket off the bowling of Gulbadin Naib to see the back of Quinton de Kock.

De Kock, by Amla's standards, had motored along to 68 by then off 72 balls with eight boundaries.

## SCOREBOARD SOUTH AFRICA VS AFGHANISTAN

**AFGHANISTAN**  
Hazratullah Zazai c van der Dussen b Rabada 22 (23b, 3x4), Noor Ali Zadrani b Tahir 32 (58b, 4x4), Rahmat Shah lbw b Morris 6 (22b, 1x4), Hashmatullah Shahidi c du Plessis b Phehlukwayo 8 (22b, 1x4), Asghar Afghan c & b Tahir 0 (5b), Mohammad Nabi b Phehlukwayo 1 (2b), Ikram Alikhil c Amla b Morris 9 (33b), Gulbadin Naib c Markram b Tahir 5 (11b), Rashid Khan c van der Dussen b Tahir 35 (25b, 6x4), Hamid Hassan c du Plessis b Morris 0 (3b), Aftab Alam (not out) 0 (1b); Extras (lb-4, w-3): 7; Total (in 34.1 overs): 125.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-39 (Zazai, 8.2 overs), 2-56 (Rahmat, 15.1), 3-69 (Shahidi, 20.4), 4-69 (Zadrani, 21.1), 5-70 (Afghan, 21.5), 6-70 (Nabi, 22.1), 7-77 (Naib, 25.2), 8-111 (Alikhil, 32.4), 9-125 (Rashid, 33.5).

**SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING**  
Rabada 8-1-36-1, Hendricks 5-1-25-0, Phehlukwayo 8-1-18-2, Morris 6-1-2-13-3, Tahir 7-0-29-4.

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
Hashim Amla (not out) 41 (83b, 4x4), Quinton de Kock c Nabi b Naib 68 (72b, 8x4), Andile Phehlukwayo (not out) 17 (17b, 2x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-1, w-4): 5; Total (for one wkt. in 28.4 overs): 131.

**FALL OF WICKET**  
1-104 (de Kock, 22.5 overs).

**AFGHANISTAN BOWLING**  
Alam 5-1-16-0, Hassan 4-1-11-0, Rashid 7-0-45-0, Naib 6-0-29-1, Nabi 6-4-0-29-0.

**Toss:** South Africa.  
**MoM:** Tahir.  
South Africa won by nine wickets with 19.2 overs to spare (DLS method).

# Indian women down Uruguay

The team impressive in its victory

**FIH SERIES FINALS**  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HIROSHIMA

The Indian women's hockey team began its campaign in the FIH Series Finals Hiroshima 2019 with an impressive 4-1 win over Uruguay here on Saturday.

Ranked No. 9 in the world, India opened through captain Rani's skilful strike in the 10th minute.

The South American side had four circle penetrations and two penalty corners, all of them kept at bay by an alert Indian defence. From the two circle penetrations India made, Rani converted one to give her side the lead.

In the 21st minute, India got its first penalty corner and Gurjant Kaur did not make any mistake in converting it (2-0).

In the third quarter, both teams kept losing the ball. India got a penalty corner but Uruguay custodian Con-

stance Schmidt-Liermann was upto the task and kept the shot out.

**Wasted penalty corners**  
In the same minute, Uruguay got two penalty corners but both were wasted as the Indian defence kept it tight.

India's constant pressure reaped dividends in the 40th minute as a nice pass from Vandana Katariya was ably converted by Jyoti.

In the 51st minute, Uruguay found the back of the Indian net with some individual brilliance from Maria Teresa Viana Ache.

India made it 4-1 in the 56th as captain Rani gave a smart pass in the opposition 'D' to an unmarked Lalremisiami, who nudged the ball into the Uruguay goal.

**The result:**  
**India 4** (Rani 10, Gurjant Kaur 21, Jyoti 40, Lalremisiami 56) **bt Uruguay 1** (Maria Teresa Viana Ache 51).



**Great start:** The Indian players had a fine day in the field. • PTI

# Dickwella designs Lankan resurgence

Visitors end up sharing series with a seven-wicket victory

**SL-A IN INDIA**  
N. SUDARSHAN  
HUBBALLI

Niroshan Dickwella's sublime century (111, 93b, 12x4, 3x6) helped Sri Lanka-A register a series-levelling seven-wicket win over India-A in the final one-day match at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 260, opens Dickwella and Sangeeth Cooray (61, 74b, 7x4) put on 165 runs to establish a firm grip over the proceedings. It appeared to loosen slightly when leggie Shreyas Gopal (three for 49) had both of them stumped in back-to-back overs.

**Firm stand**  
But Shehan Jayasuriya (45 n.o.) and skipper Ashan Priyanjan (33 n.o.) stitched together a 75-run partnership for the fourth wicket to lead their team home with 14 balls to spare and complete the comeback from 0-2 down.

As long as Dickwella was at the crease though, the result was in little doubt. After a steady start, the 25-year-old took off in the seventh over, clubbing paceman Tushar Deshpande for four successive boundaries, two of them cheeky upper-cuts.

Sandeep Warrier was welcomed in the next over with two sixes and a four before a swept boundary off Washington Sundar got him to his fifty (34b). The century would come 44 deliveries later.



**Hitting back:** Niroshan Dickwella was confidence personified as he carved out a century. • KIRAN BAKLE

Oddly, the experienced Shreyas was introduced only after 20 overs and even his best efforts from there proved inadequate.

Earlier, after being put in, India was hampered by a less-than-satisfactory performance by its middle-order. Even as opener Ruturaj Gaikwad (74, 73b, 8x4) continued his fine form, none of Anmolpreet Singh, Ricky Bhui (in for Shubman Gill) and Deepak Hooda could make good on their starts.

**Excellent spell**  
Spinner Akila Dananjaya bowled an excellent late spell (4-0-15-3) to ensure that even the lower-middle order didn't click, consuming Hooda, skipper Ishan Kishan and Shreyas. Only Mayank Mar-

kande's late flourish, which included two sixes off Priyanjan in the final over, pushed India over 250.

In the end, it made very little difference.

"We were 30 to 40 runs short," said Shreyas after the game. "But credit to Lanka for batting really well. It would have been better if we had won the series 3-1 but still it was a great experience and lot of lessons to take back."

**The scores:** India-A 259 in 50 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 74, Anmolpreet Singh 29, Ricky Bhui 38, Deepak Hooda 37, Akila Dananjaya three for 51) lost to Sri Lanka-A 260 for three in 47.4 overs (Niroshan Dickwella 111, Sangeeth Cooray 61, Shehan Jayasuriya 45 n.o., Ashan Priyanjan 33 n.o., Shreyas Gopal three for 49).

## SUDOKU

		6		1				7
					8	3	4	2
8			6				1	9
	2							8
	4	8					5	6
1							9	
2		5						1
	1	9	4	5				
	6			7				2

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

1	9	5	4	7	3	8	6	2
2	3	7	6	8	9	4	1	5
6	4	8	2	5	1	3	9	7
3	2	1	5	9	7	6	4	8
5	6	4	8	3	2	9	7	1
7	8	9	1	4	6	5	2	3
8	7	3	9	2	4	1	5	6
4	5	6	7	1	8	2	3	9
9	1	2	3	6	5	7	8	4

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

# Bopanna & Shapovalov in final

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
STUTTGART

Rohan Bopanna and Denis Shapovalov of Canada stormed into the doubles final with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Nick Kyrgios and Matt Reid of Australia in the €754,540 ATP tennis tournament here on Saturday.

**The results: €754,540 ATP, Stuttgart, Germany: Semifinals:** Denis Shapovalov (Can) & Rohan Bopanna bt Nick Kyrgios & Matt Reid (Aus) 6-3, 6-4.

**€137,560 ATP, Nottingham, England: First round:** Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja w/o Daniel Evans & Lloyd Glasspool (GBr).

**€92,040 Challenger, Lyon, France: Semifinals:** Elias Ymer (Swe) bt Sumit Nagal 6-1, 6-1.

**\$25,000 ITF men, Hong Kong: Semifinals:** Agustin Vegetti (Arg) bt Sidharth Rawat 6-0, 6-4.

**\$15,000 ITF men, Singapore: Semifinals:** Aidan Mchugh (GBr) bt Manish Sureshkumar 2-6, 6-3, 1-3 (retired).

# Brazil begins with a bang



**On the double:** Philippe Coutinho's brace powered Brazil home. • AFP

**COPA AMERICA**  
REUTERS  
SAO PAULO

Philippe Coutinho scored a second-half double and Everton added a cracking third as Brazil recovered from a sleepy start to beat Bolivia 3-0 in its Copa America opener on Friday.

Both sides were poor in the first period but the game briefly came alive five minutes into the second half

when Coutinho slotted home a VAR-assisted penalty.

Coutinho grabbed a second with a close-range header three minutes later before Everton rifled home a third from outside the box with five minutes remaining.

The match was the first of this year's tournament, which is being held in Brazil for the first time since 1989.

**The result: Group A:** Brazil 3 (Coutinho 50, 53, Everton 85) bt Bolivia 0.

# Netherlands in last 16

**WOMEN'S WC**  
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
VALENCIENNES (FRANCE)

Vivianne Miedema scored twice as the Netherlands saw off a spirited Cameroon 3-1 on Saturday to secure a place in the last 16 of the Women's World Cup football.

On Friday, England and Italy joined Germany and France in the last 16 as Jodie Taylor shot the Lionesses

past Argentina and Cristiana Girelli's controversial VAR-assisted hat-trick saw Italy hammer hapless Jamaica 5-0.

**The results:**  
**Group E:** Netherlands 3 (Miedema 41, 85, Bloodworth 48) bt Cameroon 1 (Aboudi Onguene 43).

**On Friday: Group C:** Jamaica 0 lost to Italy 5 (Girelli 12-pen, 25, 46, Galli 71, 81).

**Group D:** England 1 (Taylor 62) bt Argentina 0; Japan 2 (Iwabuchi 23, Sugawara 37-pen) bt Scotland 1 (Clelland 88).

# Sarin wins

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHENNAI

GM Nihal Sarin won the blitz title in the Asian continental chess at Xingtai, China, on Saturday. Sarin scored eight points from nine rounds and finished a point ahead of others. Sri-nath Narayanan was third with seven points behind Le Quang Liem of Vietnam.

# Good show by Chitra, Jinson

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
NIJMEGEN (THE NETHERLANDS)

Asian champion P.U. Chitra bagged the women's 1500m gold while Asian Games gold medallist Jinson Johnson broke the men's 1500m national record in the Next Generation athletics meet here on Saturday.

Chitra clocked 4:13.52s while Jinson timed 3:37.62 and bettered his own Indian record of 3:37.86s as he finished sixth.



**Did you see that?!** Cristiana Girelli became just the second Italian woman to score a World Cup hat-trick. • AFP