

A series of gains as Team India seeks T20 blueprint

Shreyas, Chahar and Dube underline the quality of talent available for the Men in Blue

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
NAGPUR

India finished the series on a high, saving its most resilient performance for the third and final T20.

The most gratifying aspect of Sunday's win was that its principal architects were two bowlers with only eight previous T20 internationals between them. Deepak Chahar and Shivam Dube belied their inexperience, hauling India out of a trough on an evening when the dew made life difficult for bowlers.

Smart operator

The emergence of Chahar, who was player of the match and series, following his record-breaking spell of six for seven at the VCA Stadium, is a major positive for India.

Used primarily in the PowerPlay by CSK, where he made his name in T20 cricket as a swing bowler, Chahar showed on Sunday that he was a smart, versatile operator. He bowled only one over in the PowerPlay, when he took two wickets, and was brought back at a stage when the ball was wet and India was under the cosh.

"Uparwala karaata hain (God makes it happen)," he said, rather modestly, at the presentation. "You don't think you will ever take six for seven in a T20. Usually I



Way to go! India rallied from an initial setback to run out deserving winner of the series. • VIVEK BENDRE

bowl with the new ball. But Rohit bhai said he would make me bowl the crucial overs today, whenever the team needed me. I'm quite happy that responsibility was given to me."

Chahar was, by a distance, the most economical of India's bowlers over the three matches, going at 5.41 runs an over. He now presents Virat Kohli a reliable pace-bowling option alongside Jasprit Bumrah and – fitness per-

mitting – Bhuvneshwar Kumar, leading into next year's T20 World Cup.

Dube, whose numbers in domestic T20 contained nothing to suggest he was a match-winning bowler, was impressive too, performing when it counted. He did not exactly shine with the bat in his two innings but that is less of a worry.

For now, Dube would seem to be the best understudy to Hardik Pandya, a

player for whom India has no direct replacement.

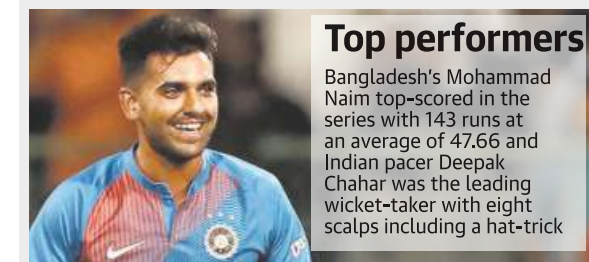
India's spinners were understandably not at their best on Sunday, but Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar made a mark in the two previous fixtures.

Chahal, who was omitted for the T20Is against South Africa and West Indies, served a proper reminder (if one was needed) of his abilities. Sundar was impressive yet again in the PowerPlay

overs although he will come up against teams stacked with power-hitters at the top, an area where Bangladesh was thoroughly deficient.

K.L. Rahul's innings on Sunday came at what looks like a critical juncture in his career. He is a batsman capable of scoring big runs across formats; it is important that he rediscovers his touch and confidence.

Shreyas Iyer, meanwhile, earned a reprieve on 0 be-



Top performers

Bangladesh's Mohammad Naim top-scored in the series with 143 runs at an average of 47.66 and Indian pacer Deepak Chahar was the leading wicket-taker with eight scalps including a hat-trick

Most runs

Player	Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	50	4s/6s
Mohammad Naim	3	143	81	47.66	1	17/3
Shreyas Iyer	3	108	62	54.00	1	7/8
Rohit Sharma	3	96	85	32.00	1	8/6
Shikhar Dhawan	3	91	41	30.33	0	11/1
K.L. Rahul	3	75	52	37.50	1	9/0

Most wickets

Player	Mat	Wkts	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR
Deepak Chahar	3	8	6/7	7.00	5.41	7.70
Aminul Islam	3	4	2/22	20.00	8.00	15.00
Shafiqul Islam	3	4	2/32	22.75	9.10	15.00
Yuzvendra Chahal	3	4	2/28	23.75	7.91	18.00
Shivam Dube	3	3	3/30	17.00	7.84	13.00

fore tearing the bowling apart. "I decided that if it is in my zone, I will not control myself," he said of his unfettered hitting.

His knock made the kind of impact India has needed from a No. 4 in limited-overs cricket for some time now. After scoring two significant half-centuries in the West Indies ODIs (albeit at 5), Shreyas now has the opportunity to nail down a berth in the middle-order in white-

ball cricket.

Four for him

"It has been a really important last few series for me, to set the benchmark at the No. 4 position, which all of us are competing for at the moment," he said. "They (team management) have given me the message 'You'll be there at No. 4. Even if Kohli and Rohit get out, we need someone to finish the game and bat till the end.'"

Hope makes it 3-0 for WI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LUCKNOW

Opener Shai Hope struck an unbeaten century as West Indies beat Afghanistan by five wickets in the third ODI to complete a 3-0 sweep on Monday.

Hope made 109 and built crucial partnerships, including an unbeaten 71-run stand with Roston Chase (42 not out) to anchor West Indies' chase of 250 with eight balls to spare.

Paceman Keemo Paul returned figures of 3/44 in Afghanistan's 249 for seven. **The scores:** Afghanistan 249/7 in 50 overs (Hazratullah Zazai 50, Asghar Afghan 86, Najibullah Zadran 30, Mohammad Nabi 50 n.o., Keemo Paul 3/44) lost to West Indies 253/5 in 48.4 overs (Shai Hope 109 n.o., Brandon King 39, Kieron Pollard 32, Roston Chase 42 n.o.).

Ghosal eases past Serme

SPORTS BUREAU
DOHA

Saurav Ghosal put up a superb performance to get past seasoned Frenchman Lucas Serme 11-8, 11-5, 11-5 and enter the pre-quarter-final of the PSA World men's squash championship here on Sunday.

The 10th-seeded Ghosal will face the top seed Mohammed Elshorbagy of Egypt next.

'Fielding is a controllable skill'

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Asked on qualities needed for close catching in Tests, R. Sridhar was quick with his answer to *The Hindu* on Monday.

"Hand-eye coordination, anticipation, awareness, reaction, reflexes, and concentration." For shorter formats, you needed, "speed, agility, strength, and power." Factors such as being quick on the turn, fluid pick-up-and-throw and presence of mind near the ropes are essential, according to the Indian fielding coach.

However, Sridhar, who has been influential in lifting the standards of Indian fielding, said: "The one element that connects fielding in all formats is technique. Fielding is a controllable skill, you got to develop the right mind-set."

Talking about the Indian close-in catching for Tests, Sridhar said, "we had Mayank Agarwal and Hanuma Vihari at silly point and short-leg against the West Indies. Then Mayank and Rohit Sharma did the job against South Africa."

He was particularly pleased with Mayank's attitude. "His intensity is very good. He is quick, has a good technique, and doesn't have the fear of getting hit."

Avoiding getting hit in these positions was also an art, said Sridhar. "If the batsman plays the cut, you jump high at silly point because the cut is usually hit



Safe hands: R. Sridhar is happy with the work of close-in fielders like Rohit, Pujara and Mayank. • FILE PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

hard into the ground. The sweep shot can be very dangerous for the fielder at short-leg. He has to make himself as small as possible, shrink."

Turning his attention to the slip cordon for Tests – so crucial because of India's potent pace attack – Sridhar said, "we have Cheteshwar Pujara at first slip, Rohit, who has great hands, at second, and Virat Kohli at third, the ball flies hard there and we need someone with Virat's reflexes. And Ajinkya Rahane has been outstanding at gully."

The composition of the Indian team – it often plays five batsmen and a wicketkeeper-batsman plus five bowlers – deprived the team of an extra close-in fielder around the bat, he felt.

Explaining this, Sridhar said: "This leaves us with only five batsmen. So we can

have three slips, a gully and just one man at either short-leg or silly point. I am not in favour of bowlers fielding in these positions. It's dangerous and they can get hurt."

Coming to the volatile shorter formats of explosive speed, Sridhar was pleased with Manish Pandey. "He is a brilliant fielder, rather underrated. I would say he is only slightly behind Ravindra Jadeja, the best all-round fielder in the world, and Kohli, a sensational athlete."

Pat for Shreyas

Among the newcomers, Shreyas Iyer had caught Sridhar's attention with his mobility. "Even the pacemen are excellent fielders now, just look at Umesh Yadav's ground coverage and throw."

Sridhar's next challenge is the pink ball. "It will have its own dynamics." The fielding coach is on the ball.

Deepti, Shafali and Smriti star in India's 10-wkt. win

Windies women fall to 0-2 in five-match series

INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GROS ISLET

Teenager Shafali Verma scored her second consecutive half-century after off-spinner Deepti Sharma starred with the ball as India Women registered a 10-wicket win over the West Indies in the second T20 International here on Sunday.

The 15-year-old Shafali scored a 69 off 35 balls and, along with Smriti Mandhana (30), powered India to a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Shafali, who overtook Sachin Tendulkar to become the youngest Indian cricketer to score an international half-century, smashed 10 fours and two sixes.

Earlier, the Indian bowlers, led by Deepti, who registered career-best figures of four for 10, managed to restrict the West Indies to 103 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs.

Opting to bat, the West Indies openers struggled to get going. Pacer Shikha Pandey drew first blood for India when she dismissed Stacy-Ann King (7) in the fourth over.

Shemaine Campbelle soon followed after Radha Yadav (1/20) had her stumped for a duck.

Opener Hayley Mathews



Player-of-the-Match: Deepti Sharma returned career-best figures of four for 10 to restrict the West Indies. • FILE PHOTO

(23) and Chedean Nation (32) tried to resurrect the West Indies innings but could only manage a 32-run stand before pacer Pooja Vastrakar (1/23) dismissed the former.

West Indies was unable to get any kind of momentum going as wickets kept tumbling. Deepti accounted for four wickets in the last four overs.

Smriti, who had also smashed a half-century in the series-opener, played second fiddle to Shafali in guiding the team home. The 23-

year-old's innings was laced with four fours.

West Indies captain Anisa Mohammed had no answer to the Indian duo and used seven bowlers, including herself, with no success.

The third T20I will be played at Providence Stadium in Guyana on November 14.

The scores: West Indies 103/7 in 20 overs (Chedean Nation 32, Deepti Sharma 4/10) lost to India 104/0 in 10.3 overs (Shafali Verma 69 n.o., Smriti Mandhana 30 n.o.).

Bengaluru Open back, Chennai misses out

Expect quality field: tournament director

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

After missing its end-of-the-season slot in 2019, the ATP Bengaluru Open Challenger tournament will return to the calendar in 2020 and will be played from February 10 to 16 at the KSLTA courts here.

The Bengaluru Open will take the slot previously held by the Chennai Open Challenger (\$50,000) over the past two years. It has been learnt that Chennai will not host a Challenger tournament in 2020.

The Challenger 125 category competition, boasting of a prize purse of \$162,000, will follow India's only ATP Tour level

■ The Challenger 125 category competition boasts of a prize purse of \$162,000

tournament, the Tata Open Maharashtra in Pune (February 3 to 8).

The organisers' hope is that the timing will ensure the participation of a sizeable number of top-100 players alongside the cream of Indian talent.

"I thank the Government of Karnataka for the unflinching support to this event in the recent editions," said Sunil Yajaman, the tournament director. "On the competition front, I expect a quality field."

Thiem gives Federer a reality check

Six-time champion at risk of crashing out early; Tsitsipas starts well

ATP FINALS

REUTERS
LONDON

Roger Federer said he had no more margin for error if he wanted to avoid an early exit at the ATP Finals after losing his opening group match to Dominic Thiem on Sunday.

The 38-year-old Swiss, bidding for his seventh title at the event but his first since 2011, struggled to handle Thiem's aggressive game as he went down 7-5, 7-5.

Only once in 16 previous appearances has Federer failed to survive the group phase, in 2008, and to avoid a repeat he will have to beat Italian Matteo Berrettini on Tuesday and most probably Novak Djokovic on Thursday.

Djokovic, aiming to claw back the year-end number one ranking from Rafael Nadal, had destroyed debutant



Winning strategy: Thiem's aggressive game paid dividends against Federer. • AFP

Berrettini 6-2, 6-1 in the day's opening singles match at the O2 Arena.

Thiem put constant pressure on Federer and broke at 5-5 in each set to claim his third win over the Swiss this year. "My forecast, it's a normal tournament from here

on forward," said the 20-time Grand Slam champion Federer, beaten by Djokovic in an epic Wimbledon final in July.

"I've got to recover, I've got to make sure I play better than today."

In the first match-up in Group Andre Agassi, Stefa-

nos Tsitsipas took out the higher-seeded Daniil Medvedev 7-6(5), 6-4

The results: Group Bjorn Borg: Dominic Thiem bt Roger Federer 7-5, 7-5.

Group Andre Agassi: Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Daniil Medvedev 7-6(5), 6-4.

IOA rejects draft National Sports Code

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India will incur the International Olympic Committee's wrath and may even be suspended if it goes ahead with administrative reforms suggested in the draft National Sports Code 2017, the Indian Olympic Association has warned, rejecting the proposed document completely.

Surprise

The IOA also expressed surprise with the Government's move to seek feedback on the draft after Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, on October 11, announced the formation of a committee to look into the contentious provisions such as age and tenure cap on officials, which are being opposed by National Sports Federations.

Despite the announce-

Bangladesh, India arrive for first Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

The India and Bangladesh cricket teams arrived in Indore on Monday for the first Test scheduled to start on November 14.

The two squads reached the Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport by a special plane from Nagpur, where they played the third and final T20 International on Sunday, and then headed for their respective hotels, according to a Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA) official.

There is much that India has gained from this series. Rohit Sharma put it well at the presentation.

"We can try a lot of things before we get on the flight to Australia," he said. "But if we keep performing the way we did today, it's going to be a big headache for Virat and the selectors."

Juventus wins but Ronaldo miffed

REUTERS
TURIN

Juventus stayed top of Serie A with a 1-0 win over AC Milan on Sunday after Cristiano Ronaldo was substituted for the second game in a row and walked straight down the tunnel, clearly unhappy at the decision.

Paulo Dybala scored the only goal in the 77th minute after replacing Ronaldo in the 55th, the Portugal captain's earliest substitution since he joined Juve at the start of last season.

Despite producing a lacklustre display, Ronaldo gave coach Maurizio Sarri a dirty look, muttered something under his breath and walked straight down the tunnel.

Ronaldo was also replaced during Wednesday's Champions League match at Lokomotiv Moscow when he again looked unhappy at the decision.

Juventus, chasing a ninth successive title, moved to 32 points, one point ahead of Inter Milan.

The results: La Liga: Getafe 0 drew with Osasuna 0; Real Betis 1 (Loren 45) lost to Sevilla 2 (Ocampos 13, De Jong 55).

Serie A: Parma 2 (Sprocati 68, Cornelius 90+3) bt Roma 0; Juventus 1 (Dybala 77) bt AC Milan 0.

Bundesliga: Freiburg 1 (Peter-son 77) bt Eintracht Frankfurt 0.

through Rijiju, the ministry, (Sports), sent a letter to the IOA on October 24 to send feedback on the draft latest by November 10.

IOA secretary-general Rajeev Mehta, in turn, sent a note rejecting the changes proposed by the 2017 Draft National Sports Code.

"We, the IOA and all our members, outrightly reject the new Draft Sports Code as it interferes in the autonomy of the IOA and its members. The Sports Code was discussed with GOI MYAS and implemented in 2014 in IOA Statutes which enabled IOA to regain its recognition in 2012," Mehta said.

"Any further interference in IOA autonomy will also be taken seriously by IOC and OCA and can once again lead to suspension of membership of IOA," he added.