

Australia runs away with cup as India crumbles on the big stage

Healy and Mooney set up a daunting target; Women in Blue flounder in the chase, lose by a mile



Reign continues: Australia celebrates winning the ICC Women's T20 World Cup for a fifth time. *AFP

T20 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

India saved its worst for the last. A brutal Australia outclassed India by 85 runs to claim a fifth ICC T20 World Cup title on Sunday.

Batting first after the coin landed in Meg Lanning's favour, Australia came out in scintillating fashion with openers Alyssa Healy (75, 39b) and Beth Mooney (78, 54b) laying the foundation with a 115-run partnership in double quick time.

Stirred up

Stirred up by the grand occasion, their onslaught fired

Australia to a formidable 184 for four in 20 overs.

Evidently overwhelmed by the occasion, India crumbled to 99 all out in front of a turnout of 86,174 at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground, a record in women's cricket history.

What worked in the home team's favour was that the openers easily neutralised the threat posed by in-form spinner Poonam Yadav (one for 30), while taking the likes of medium-pace Shikha Pandey and Deepti Sharma to the cleaners. Shikha was smashed for 52 runs in her four overs.

Half the battle was won for the formidable Australians,

who had saved their best for the last.

The manner and magnitude of the defeat, including a few sub plots, were reminiscent of the 2003 men's World Cup final when Ricky Ponting's Australia thrashed Sourav Ganguly's India in an anti-climactic title clash.

All nerves

Like Zaheer Khan in his opening over at the Wanderers against Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden, Deepti Sharma was all nerves when up against Mooney and Healy, who blasted massive sixes as a beaming husband Mitchell Starc watched from the stands.

The match was as good as over when India was 18 for three by the fourth over, which became 30 for four when skipper Harmanpreet Kaur departed and 58 for five when Veda Krishnamurthy was taking the long walk back.

Earlier, Mooney and Healy rode on dropped chances to smash blistering fifties and power Australia to a challenging 184 for four.

Dropped catches

Mooney top-scored for Australia, but it was Healy, who went on the attack after being dropped off the fifth ball of the innings by Shafali Verma off Deepti Sharma. Hea-

STAT SPHERE

1 Alyssa Healy scored the fastest fifty (30 balls) in an ICC tournament final (both men's and women's categories). She beat Hardik Pandya's record (32 balls, 2017 Champions Trophy final against Pakistan)

1 Healy's strike-rate of 192.30 is the highest in an ICC tournament final (men and women), overtaking Hardik (76 off 43 balls at a strike-rate of 176.74) in the CT 2017 final

5 Number of women's World T20 titles won by Australia in seven editions of the tournament. England (2009) and West Indies (2016) are the other winners

Openers Healy and Mooney sent the Indians on a leather hunt

6 Number of finals played by Australia. England is second with four and New Zealand third with two

8 Number of times the Indian teams (men and women) have made it to the knock-out stages of an ICC tournament since 2014 (four semifinals, four finals). They have, however, failed to win a title

163 Runs scored by Shafali Verma in this edition (five innings). Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues scored 164 runs combined in 14 innings in this tournament

184 Australia's total, the highest by a team in a World T20 final (men and women). West Indies (men) had made 161 in the 2016 World T20 final against England

259 Beth Mooney's run tally is the most in any World T20 tournament. She won the Player-of-the-tournament award for her exploits

86,174 Number of people who attended the T20 World Cup final, the highest for any women's sporting event in Australia

COMPILED BY ANANTAJITH RA

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA

Alyssa Healy c Veda b Radha 75 (39b, 7x4, 5x6), Beth Mooney (not out) 78 (54b, 10x4), Meg Lanning c Shikha b Deepti 16 (15b, 2x4), Ashleigh Gardner st. Taniya b Deepti 2 (3b), Rachael Haynes b Poonam 4 (5b), Nicola Carey (not out) 5 (5b, 1x4); Extras (b-1, nb-1, w-2): 4; Total (for 4 wkts. in 20 overs): 184.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-115 (Healy, 11.4 overs), 2-154 (Lanning, 16.2), 3-156 (Gardner, 16.5), 4-176 (Haynes, 18.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Deepti 4-0-38-2, Shikha 4-0-52-0, Rajeshwari 4-0-29-0, Poonam 4-0-30-1, Radha

4-0-34-1.

INDIA

Shafali Verma c Healy b Schutt 2 (3b), Smriti Mandhana c Carey b Molineux 11 (8b, 2x4), Taniya Bhatia ret'd. hurt 2 (4b), Jemimah Rodrigues c Carey b Jonassen 0 (2b), Harmanpreet Kaur c Gardner b Jonassen 4 (7b, 1x4), Deepti Sharma c Mooney b Carey 33 (35b, 2x4), Veda Krishnamurthy c Jonassen b Kimmince 19 (24b, 1x4), Richa Ghosh c Carey b Schutt 18 (18b, 2x4), Shikha Pandey c Mooney b Schutt 2 (4b), Radha Yadav c Mooney b Jonassen 1 (2b), Poonam Yadav c Gardner b Schutt 1 (5b), Rajeshwari Gayakwad (not out) 1 (3b); Extras (w-5): 5. Total (in 19.1 overs): 99.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-2 (Shafali, 0.3), 2-8 (Jemimah, 1.6), 3-18 (Smriti, 3.1), 4-30 (Harmanpreet, 5.4), 5-58 (Veda, 11.3), 6-88 (Deepti, 16.1), 7-92 (Shikha, 17.1), 8-96 (Richa, 17.3), 9-97 (Radha, 18.1).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Schutt 3-1-0-18-4, Jonassen 4-0-20-3, Molineux 4-0-21-1, Kimmince 4-0-17-1, Carey 4-0-23-1.

Player-of-the-Final: Alyssa Healy.

Player-of-the-Tournament: Beth Mooney.

Richa Ghosh batted as concussion substitute for Taniya Bhatia.

Australia won by 85 runs.

Despite the final stumble, a campaign to be proud of

Teenaged talent to the fore; senior batters disappoint

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The G was abuzz with a record turnout. While the Australian women rose to the occasion, their Indian counterparts wilted under big match pressure at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Despite the disappointing loss, captain Harmanpreet Kaur, head coach W.V. Raman and the touring entourage have every reason to hold their heads high after a highly successful campaign.

No doubt the final was lopsided, but the loss should not take away anything from the Indian girls who exceeded expectations.

For starters, India was clubbed in the 'group of death', with Australia and New Zealand wanted to progress to the semifinals from its pool.

To add to the woes, two of its experienced batters — Harmanpreet and the stylish Smriti Mandhana — never got going. Still, to maintain a clean slate and top the group was creditable.

With the two seniors struggling for big runs, three



Playing her part: Deepti Sharma contributed to the team's cause with handy batting and effective spin bowling. *AP

teenaged prodigies — Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh — came to the fore consistently, with allrounder Deepti Sharma and finisher Veda Krishnamurthy making vital contributions in the latter half.

Shikha, Poonam shine

While Deepti was consistent with her off-breaks as well, the bowling burden was shouldered by the experienced duo of Shikha Pandey and Poonam Yadav.

While Poonam bamboozled

opposition batters with her combination of leg-breaks and googlies, pacer Shikha was at her best with the new ball and also in the death overs.

Shikha also played the silent contributor's role to perfection.

They may have failed to cross the hurdle again in a World Cup summit clash, after the 2017 50-over event in England, but the Women in Blue have proved in the last three weeks that they have a bright future ahead of them.

Reaching final no mean achievement: Shantha

N. SUDARSHAN
BENGALURU

Despite Sunday's crushing loss, India's run to the T20 World Cup final was "no mean achievement," believes Shantha Rangaswamy, former India skipper and current member of the BCCI Apex Council.

"We have to give the team credit," Shantha said. "To focus just on the defeat and not on the earlier wins is not fair. We should congratulate Harmanpreet Kaur and team."

"The final was the first match Shafali didn't click and you saw the collapse. Harman's form is causing concern. Jemimah is perhaps one of the best we have; an excellent fielder,



Contrasts: While Shafali had a poor match, Healy, snapping up the Indian off Schutt, had a dream day. *GETTY IMAGES

great bat and a future captain. But it's time they justify the 'senior' tag."

Shantha felt there was immense scope for Shafali to improve. "She is an exciting talent and we want her to play long-term. For that she needs to get fitter. She has brilliant hand-eye coordination like [Virender] Sehwag and [Kris] Srikkanth, but her fielding and running between the wickets are below par.

"After the 2017 World Cup final (that India lost), the number of women taking up cricket tripled, even quadrupled.

"Broadening the base is our dire need, and, in that context, Harman and team have done well."

Have full faith in team: Harmanpreet

Rues dropped chances, says side has to work on fielding



The blues! After a fine run, the Indians were found wanting in the most important match. *AFP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said on Sunday she had full faith in her team to do well in future after Australia outclassed her side by 85 runs in the summit clash.

"The way we played in the league games was outstanding. I still have a lot of faith in my team," Harmanpreet said. "It's part of the game, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. You have to keep learning. But I trust this team," she said.

Harmanpreet, however,

rueed the dropped chances of Beth Mooney and Alyssa Healy, who set up their team's victory. She said the team needs to work on its fielding.

"Today, it was unfortunate that we dropped those catches. The upcoming one-and-a-half years is very important. We need to focus, especially in fielding," she said. The skipper reckoned her side needed to learn how to win high-stakes clashes. "If we talk about the last T20 World Cup, we got to the semis, and this time to

the final. I think we're on the right path. Every year we are improving. We just need to think of how we play with focus in the main games. Sometimes we don't manage that," she said.

She spoke highly of the domestic IPL-style Women's Challenger. "This year we are hoping for some more games in the Women's Challenger. That tournament is very important because it is high quality. From there, we already got two good players, and hopefully we can get more."

What the legends said



Proud of all the efforts put in by the Indian Women's Cricket Team throughout their #T20WorldCup campaign. I'm confident that you girls will bounce back stronger than ever. @BCCIWomen
VIRAT KOHLI

Gutted by the result today. Nonetheless the girls have had a wonderful #T20WorldCup campaign. I congratulate the T20 captain @ImHarmanpreet and the girls. Well done. Request everyone to continue supporting women's cricket. Only great things are in store
MITHALI RAJ

Congratulations to Australia for winning the @T20WorldCup. It was a tough day for #TeamIndia. Our team is young and will grow into a solid unit. You have inspired many across the globe. We are proud of you. Keep working hard and never lose hope. It will happen one day. #INDvsAUS
SACHIN TENDULKAR

Never be let down. You have been amazing throughout and you'll shall have the trophy at your hand one day. Keep believing!
@BCCIWomen
VIV RICHARDS

The athletes of the India team are true champions of the sport. Continue to dream big, train hard, never give up. #IWD #IWD2020 #T20WorldCup #T20WorldCup-Final
BILLIE JEAN KING

Our girls gave their everything, just had one bad day but it was so wonderful to see the way in which they played barring today. Wishing them better luck next time. Congratulations to Australia on winning the #T20WorldCup
VIRENDER SEHWAG

It was a delight watching you through your campaign at the #WT20WC and the many moments of brilliance you've given us. We are all immensely proud of what you've been able to achieve. Upwards and onwards.
@BCCIWomen
JASPRIT BUMRAH

Hardik Pandya makes an expected return to ODI squad

Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar back too; Gill in for Jadhav

SA IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

India's captain and head coach may have tried to downplay the whitewash in New Zealand by stating ODIs aren't a priority in a T20 World Cup year but Sunil Joshi — in his first meeting as selection committee chief — hinted at the selectors building a team for the 2023 World Cup.

Hardik Pandya, Shikhar Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar — who have regained fitness after being out due to injuries — expectedly returned to the fold for the three ODIs against South Africa. The trio, which excelled for Reliance 1 during the recently-concluded DY Patil T20 tournament in Navi

Mumbai, replaced Shivam Dube, Shardul Thakur and Mayank Agarwal from the squad that went to New Zealand.

Swashbuckling form

Hardik has been in swashbuckling form with the willow — he scored two hundreds, including a 158-run blitzkrieg that included 20 sixes and also picked a five-wicket haul — while Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar were put through their paces to prove match-fitness.

Future planning

But the first meeting of the re-jigged selection panel, held in Ahmedabad on Sunday before the selectors headed to Rajkot to watch the Ranji Trophy final, preferred to include promising

youngster Shubman Gill in place of middle-order batsman Kedar Jadhav, thus indicating the planning for the future has begun.

While Jadhav — who will turn 35 later this month — had been persisted with after the last World Cup, Joshi and Co. opted for Gill. It would be interesting to see if Gill, who featured in a couple of ODIs early last year in New Zealand, gets some game-time against South Africa.

Despite the BCCI not elaborating on the changes in the squad, it is understood that pacer Mohammed Shami has been rested as part of the workload management regime. After a heavy workout in New Zealand across formats, Shami has also not been released for the Ranji final.

India squad for SA ODIs

Virat Kohli (Capt.), Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, K.L. Rahul, Manish Pandey, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Yadav, and Shubman Gill

IN: Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, Hardik Pandya and Bhuvneshwar Kumar

OUT: Mayank Agarwal, Kedar Jadhav, Shivam Dube, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami

THE SCHEDULE

March 12: Dharamshala
March 15: Lucknow
March 18: Kolkata
All matches begin at 1.30 p.m.