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Sharma stars as India beat Pakistan

Kohli becomes quickest player to score 11,000 one-day international runs



MANCHESTER: India's captain Virat Kohli (R) plays a shot as Pakistan's captain Sarfaraz Ahmed looks on during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between India and Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester, northwest England, yesterday. — AFP

MANCHESTER: Rohit Sharma scored his second hundred in three innings as India maintained their unbeaten record against Pakistan at the World Cup with an 89-run win under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method yesterday. Sharma's 140 was the centrepiece of a total of 336-5 that also featured captain Virat Kohli's 77. Victory in this rain-curtailed clash saw India, who have now won all seven of their World Cup matches against Pakistan, remain unbeaten after four pool games at this year's edition.

Pakistan, whose only 2019 pool win so far was a shock defeat of hosts England, were never truly up with the rate in the showpiece match of the 10-team round-robin stage. They still had hope at 117 for one even though the most made by any side batting second to win a World Cup match is Ireland's 329 for seven against England at Bangalore in 2011.

But Kuldeep Yadav then struck twice to spark a col-

lapse that saw Pakistan lose four wickets for 12 runs in 18 balls as they slumped to 129 for five in 27 overs-long past the 20-over cut-off point needed for a result under D/L.

A third rain stoppage came with Pakistan 166-6 off 35 overs. The match then descended into something of a farce when play resumed under leaden skies, with Pakistan requiring an outlandish 136 more runs in five overs to reach a revised victory total of 302 in 40 overs. That target which, eventually became 94 off the last six balls, unsurprisingly proved beyond them as Pakistan finished on 212-6, dealing a major blow to their semi-final hopes as India took the bragging rights yet again. Worryingly for India, paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar limped off in the fifth over of Pakistan's chase with a hamstring injury that sidelined him from the rest of the match. But Vijay Shankar, completing the over, struck first ball when he had opener Imam-ul-Haq lbw for sev-

en. Fakhar Zaman (62) and Babar Azam (48) repaired the damage with a century stand, before they both fell to left-arm wrist-spinner Yadav as they tried to up the tempo. Babar was bowled between bat by a superb delivery before Zaman miscued a sweep to short fine leg. All-rounder Hardik Pandya then took two wickets in two balls. Mohammad Hafeez was caught at deep square leg before Shoaib Malik played on for his second successive duck—a wicket greeted with huge roars by the massed ranks of India fans in a capacity crowd, with an estimated one billion watching on television.

Earlier, Kohli became the quickest player to 11,000 one-day international runs, getting there in 222nd innings compared to compatriot Sachin Tendulkar's previous record of 276 innings.

Meanwhile, Pakistan left-arm quick Mohammad Amir continued his fine form with 3-47 despite two early warnings for running on the pitch. But not even Amir

could stop Sharma and KL Rahul (57) marking their first ODI match as an opening duo with a stand of 136 after Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed won the toss.

Sharma, who made 122 in India's opening win over South Africa and 57 against Australia, went to fifty with a six over long-on and a cut four off successive deliveries from recalled leg-spinner Shadab Khan.

He then entered the 90s with an extraordinary square-cut six off paceman Hasan Ali. His single off Shadab saw Sharma to an 85-ball hundred including three sixes and nine fours. It was Sharma's 24th ODI century. But a quickfire stand of 98 with Kohli ended when Sharma, trying a needlessly extravagant scoop, flicked Hasan to short fine leg. Kohli, 71 not out at the start of a 55-minute rain break, fell soon after the resumption when, trying to hook Amir, he 'walked' for a catch behind by wicket-keeper Sarfaraz despite replays appearing to show he didn't hit the ball. — AFP

Sarri takes charge at Juventus after leaving Chelsea

MILAN: Maurizio Sarri was named as new coach of Juventus after his exit from Chelsea was confirmed by both clubs yesterday, following a troubled single season in London. Sarri returns to Italy on a three-year deal just a season after leaving Napoli for Stamford Bridge, where he failed to garner fan support despite winning the Europa League and returning the Blues to the Champions League thanks to a third-placed finish in the Premier League.

"Maurizio Sarri has returned to Italy, where he has coached for the majority of his career. And from today, he will take over the reins at Juventus with a contract until June 30, 2022," Juventus said in a statement.

The Europa League win last month was Sarri's first major trophy as a coach, but he will be expected to deliver far more in Turin. Juventus have won Serie A

for the past eight seasons, denying Sarri during his time at Napoli despite posting a club record points tally in each of his three years in charge.

However, Massimiliano Allegri left the Bianconeri at the end of the campaign after failing to guide the Italian giants to Champions League glory despite the signing of Cristiano Ronaldo last year. With Ronaldo now 34, Juventus' first Champions League title since 1996 will be Sarri's top priority.

The Italian champions are keen on the brand of football Sarri imposed during three years at Napoli. However, questions will be asked of Sarri's ability to handle a dressing room of big egos at Juventus given his struggles to impose the same style and deal with player relations at Chelsea over the past year.

Sarri routinely questioned the mental strength of his squad at Stamford Bridge, claiming they were "difficult to motivate." The 60-year-old former banker looked set to leave in February when his authority was questioned after goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga refused to be substituted towards the end of the League Cup final to stay on the field for a penalty shootout, which Chelsea lost to Manchester City. Yet, Sarri did manage to end on a high as Chelsea lost just one of their last eight Premier League games while the other contenders for a top-

four finish stumbled towards the end of the season. Eden Hazard then bade farewell in fitting fashion by scoring twice in a 4-1 rout of Arsenal in the Europa League final to ensure Chelsea again ended the season with a trophy despite the turmoil.

The timing of Juventus' approach could not have been better for Sarri, though, with success at Chelsea likely to be far tougher for his successor. Hazard joined Real Madrid last week for a fee in excess of 100 million euros (\$113 million), while Chelsea currently cannot recruit a replacement with the club serving a two-window transfer ban handed down by FIFA. That is likely to lead to a change of tack in appointing the 11th permanent manager of Roman Abramovich's reign in charge of the club. Chelsea are expected to try and lure a club legend in Frank Lampard back to Stamford Bridge despite the former midfielder's relative lack of experience after just one season in management at Derby.

His attempt to lead the Rams back to the Premier League fell just short with defeat to Aston Villa in the Championship playoff final. However, Lampard's return would appease a fan base that never took to Sarri and should see Chelsea using the transfer ban as an opportunity to finally prioritise the products of the club's highly respected academy. —AFP



BAKU: In this file photo taken on May 29, 2019, Chelsea's Italian head coach Maurizio Sarri holds the trophy as he celebrates winning the UEFA Europa League final football match between Chelsea FC and Arsenal FC at the Baku Olympic Stadium in Baku. — AFP