



DUBAI: Australia's players pose with the trophy after winning the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup final match against New Zealand at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday. — AFP

Australia win maiden T20 World Cup

DUBAI: Mitchell Marsh smashed an unbeaten 77 as Australia hammered New Zealand by eight wickets to clinch their maiden Twenty20 World Cup title yesterday. Chasing 173 for victory, Australia depended on a 92-run second-wicket stand between David Warner, who made 53, and Marsh to achieve their target with seven balls to spare in Dubai. Warner became Trent Boult's second wicket but Marsh kept up the charge to power Australia home to their long-awaited T20 crown and add to their five 50-over World Cup trophies.

Glenn Maxwell, who made 28, joined Marsh, who hit six fours and four sixes in his 50-ball knock, to put on 66 runs and hit the winning boundary as the Aussies came charging in to celebrate the triumph. "It's huge. We felt like a lot of people wrote us off but we spoke about being the first team to do this for Australia and it feels really special," said Matthew Wade.

Skipper Kane Williamson hit a valiant 85 in New Zealand's 172-4 after being invited to bat first in a crucial toss won by Aaron Finch as teams chasing have won

all but one game at the venue. Australia, whose previous best was a runners-up finish in 2010, came into this edition's semifinal with one loss to England and beat Pakistan in the final-four clash with a chase of 177. Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood returned figures of 3-16 and leg-spinner Adam Zampa had 1-26.

'Superb player'

"Kane's a superb player," said Hazlewood. "It was another classical innings, runs all around the ground and he hurts you when you bowl poorly." Australia suffered an early blow in their chase when Finch departed for five off Boult as a largely neutral but not packed-to-capacity crowd roared. But the left-right batting pair of Warner and Marsh combined to take apart the bowling with fours and sixes galore.

Marsh hit Adam Milne for one six and two fours on his first three balls of the knock to signal his ruthless intent. Warner also kept up his punishing act as he hammered leg-spinner Ish Sodhi for 17 runs in one over with just a single to Marsh. He smoked Jimmy Neesham for a

six to raise his third half-century of the tournament but soon fell to Boult. Warner, with 289 runs in total, ended second behind Pakistan's Babar Azam (303) in the tournament's batting chart.

Earlier Williamson, who was dropped on 21, started cautiously but once settled took on the opposition bowling to reach his first half-century of the tournament. He finished with 10 fours and three sixes in his 48-ball blitz to lift New Zealand from 57-1 in 10. The Kiwis initially struggled and lost Daryl Mitchell caught behind for 11 off Hazlewood.

Opening batsman Martin Gupthill failed to get quick runs despite his three boundaries and a 48-run second-wicket stand with Williamson. Williamson survived a spill by Hazlewood in the deep with the ball popping out of the fielder's hand to find the boundary. Pace spearhead Mitchell Starc was the bowler. The captain hit back with two more fours off left-arm quick Starc who was taken for 60 runs from his four overs, to get some momentum into the innings.

Zampa sent Gupthill trudging back to the dugout after the opener's 35-ball 28



Australia's David Warner receives the Player of the Tournament trophy yesterday.

but Williamson kept up the charge with two sixes off Maxwell. Williamson again picked out Starc to smash four fours and one six in a 22-run 16th over and put on 68 with Glenn Phillips, who made 18. Hazlewood returned in his final over to

break the stand with Phillips' wicket and then got Williamson out with a leg-cutter. The seventh edition of the tournament was moved out of India due to the coronavirus pandemic to be staged in Oman and United Arab Emirates. — AFP

Rossi bows out an 'idol' as Bagnaia wins season-closer

VALENCIA, Spain: Valentino Rossi was described as an "idol" yesterday as he closed the door on his career with a 10th-place finish at the season-ending Valencia MotoGP, won by Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia, appropriately one of the great Italian's proteges. The 42-year-old Rossi, a nine-time world champion across all categories, took all the applause from the 75,000 crowd as he rode an ovation lap in Valencia, which was his 432nd GP since starting his career back in 1996.

Jorge Martin, of the Ducati-Pramac team, and Jack Miller (Ducati) completed the podium at the 18th race of the season for a first ever Ducati podium sweep. Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo, who had already secured the world championship, finished fifth after a heavy fall in qualifying. It was a fourth win of the season for Bagnaia, who came through the VR46 Academy created by Rossi.

The 24-year-old finished the season 26 points behind Quartararo as runner-up in the title race. He dominated the race but once former Brazilian footballer Ronaldo waved the chequered flag, all the attention turned to Rossi as the riders stopped to pay homage, fireworks went off and cries of "Vale, Vale" echoed around the stands. His number 46 was

everywhere, including on Bagnaia's helmet and up in the stands of the Ricardo Tormo circuit where his initials and number 'VR46' fluttered on yellow flags in the Valencian sunshine.

In the paddock, the nine motorcycles that brought him world titles were lined up side by side since Thursday when he posed with each for an evocative photo-shoot. A giant street-art fresco displaying the portrait of the smiling "Dottore" overlooked the starting line.

'My idol'

If this season was his poorest in 26 seasons at world level - he finished a distant 18th in the standings - there were no tears, just a trademark grin from "The Doctor". "Rossi, he's been my idol since I was little," said 22-year-old Quartararo who was not even born when the Italian won his first world title in the 125cc category in 1997. "He influenced me a lot in this sport and in the way of working. He's a rider that I adore, as a rider and as a person for that matter. "It is sad that this is his last race but we celebrated it well with the whole Yamaha team."

Rossi's last title dates back to 2009 and his last GP victory in 2017 but that has not dulled the adoration felt by fans. He claimed his first world title in 1997, a year after making his 125cc debut, following up with the 250cc championship in 1999. Graduating to the premier class he was runner-up in his first season in 2000 before taking the final world title race in the 500cc format a year later with Honda.

He added six more in the new MotoGP class in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009, the first two with Honda, the rest with Yamaha. He retires



CHESTE, Spain: Petronas Yamaha SRT Italian rider Valentino Rossi waves after the MotoGP race of the Valencia Grand Prix at the Ricardo Tormo racetrack yesterday. — AFP

with 115 victories including a record 89 in MotoGP, 235 podiums (199 in the top flight), also a record, and the longest career of any rider in the sport's premier class. Next season his VR46 team will make its debut in MotoGP next year as a Ducati satellite.

Australian rider Remy Gardner became Moto2 world champion, emulating his father Wayne's

500cc world championship in 1987, in spite of only finishing tenth behind his main rival and Kalex teammate Raul Fernandez. Spain's Xavier Artigas of Honda won his maiden Moto3 GP on the same track earlier after countryman Pedro Acosta, winner of the world title last week at the age of just 17, fell on the final lap. — AFP