

Ton-up Abhishek stars in India's series-levelling win

STATE TIMES NEWS

HARARE: Young Abhishek Sharma announced his arrival on the big stage with a breathtaking 46-ball century as India pummeled Zimbabwe by a whopping 100 runs in the second T20I to restore parity in a resounding fashion here Sunday.

This is India's biggest margin of victory in terms of runs against Zimbabwe in T20Is.

The young Indian side didn't carry the baggage of a shock 13-run defeat in the series-opener as left-handed opener Abhishek blended power with grace for a scintillating 100-run knock that propelled India to a massive 234 for two on a track where batting wasn't exactly easy.

The ask was already stiff and Indian bowlers got breakthroughs at regular intervals to bowl out Zimbabwe for 134 in 18.4 overs to set the record straight.

Pacers Mukesh Kumar (3/37) and Avesh Khan (3/15) removed the top-order inside the Powerplay to kill the contest which became a formality after that.



The day certainly belonged to Abhishek, who mixed grace and power in equal measure in an innings, embellished with eight sixes and seven fours.

It made a normally stylish Rituraj Gaikwad (77 not out off 47 balls) look pale in comparison during their 137-run stand for the second wicket.

His innings would also increase the headache for skipper Shubman Gill and stand-in coach VVS Laxman, who would need to take a tough call when Yashasvi Jaiswal is available from the third game.

After his century, there is no way that the Sunrisers

Hyderabad opener can be dropped from the playing XI.

Having endured the disappointment of a four-ball duck on debut, Abhishek never looked under pressure on a track which his senior partner and current CSK partner Gaikwad found "difficult to feel set".

The hallmark of his innings was fearlessness as he took calculated risks which paid off and allowed Gaikwad at the other end to get into the groove after playing and missing for the better part of his innings.

Abhishek got a reprieve on 27 when Wellington Masakadza dropped a regula-

tion skier off Luke Jongwe. He never looked back after that.

Having started his international run account with a pulled six off-spinner Brian Bennett, who had got the better of him on Saturday.

His fifty came off another pulled six behind square off

medium pacer Dion Myers, whose 28-run over actually opened the floodgates during the back-10 for the visitors.

The shot that was most pleasing to the eye was his inside out six off rival skipper Sikandar Raza, lofting his off-break with the turn over extra cover boundary.

SCOREBOARD	
INDIA	
Shubman Gill (c) c Bennett b Muzarabani	02
Abhishek Sharma c Myers b Masakadza	100
Rituraj Gaikwad not out	77
Rinku Singh not out	48
Extras	07
Total	234/2
ZIMBABWE	
Innocent Kaia b Mukesh Kumar	04
Wesly Madhevere b Ravi Bishnoi	43
Brian Bennett b Mukesh Kumar	26
Dion Myers c Singh b Avesh Khan	00
Sikandar Raza (c) c Jurel b Avesh Khan	04
Johnathan Campbell c Bishnoi b Sundar	10
Clive Madande † lbw b Ravi Bishnoi	00
Wellington Masakadza run out (†Jurel)	01
Luke Jongwe c Gaikwad b Mukesh Kumar	33
Blessing Muzarabani c Sundar b Avesh Khan	02
Tendai Chatara not out	00
Extras	11
Total	134/10

Double delight for Abhay and India at Asian Doubles Squash C'ship

STATE TIMES NEWS

JOHOR: The talented Abhay Singh performed admirably to win double crown at the Asian Doubles Squash Championships here on Sunday.

Asian Games team championship gold medalist Abhay won the men's doubles crown along with Velavan Senthilkumar. The top-seeded pair made short work of Malaysian second seeds Ong Sai Hung and Syafiq Kamal 11-4, 11-5.

Later, Abhay and the experienced Joshua Chinappa, the third seeds, put it past the second-seeded Hong Kong duo of Tong Tsz Wing and Tang Ming Hong 11-8, 10-11, 11-5 in the mixed doubles final.

"I'm very happy with the



way Abhay and I performed this week. We were confident and got better as we advanced in the tournament," Senthilkumar said in a release.

"It was timely of the SRFI and HCL to revive the National Doubles Championships after a long gap as it allowed us to gain momentum."

Joshua, who was conferred with the Padma Shri earlier this year, said, "It means so much to me to play for India again, especially since I was out of action for the last five months following a knee surgery."

"Playing doubles was a great opportunity to return to India action first before I get back on the PSA Tour."

Expecting India to win both CT and WTC final under Rohit's captaincy: BCCI Secretary Shah

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: T20 World Cup-winning skipper Rohit Sharma will continue to lead India in the ODI and Test formats BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Sunday, exuding confidence that the country will win next year's Champions Trophy and World Test Championship under his captaincy.

The 37-year-old Rohit, who became the third Indian captain after legendary Kapil Dev and Mahendra Singh Dhoni to win a global trophy, has announced his retirement from the T20 format.

"The next stage is the WTC final and the Champions Trophy. I have full faith in Rohit Sharma's captaincy, that we will be the champions



in both these tournaments," secretary Shah said in a video message.

The Champions Trophy, scheduled in Pakistan next year, will be held after eight years (since 2017 in UK), and even though the draft schedule has been submitted

to the ICC, the BCCI hasn't yet given its green light to it. It is understood BCCI will again push for the 'Hybrid Model' like 2023 ODI Asia Cup where India played all its matches, including the ones against Pakistan, in Sri Lanka. Shah's message, in a

way, has put to rest speculations about whether Rohit would quit leadership role in other formats. Till Rohit calls it quits, India will once again have split captaincy with Rohit leading in ODIs and Tests while Hardik Pandya is expected to take charge of the T20 outfit.

Rohit had also led India to the finals of the WTC and ODI World Cup last year, where India lost the summit clash after winning 10 straight games.

Shah dedicated India's T20 World Cup triumph to the three cricketers, who quit the format after the title victory and outgoing coach Rahul Dravid.

"I want to dedicate this victory to coach Rahul Dravid, cap-

tain Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

"This was our third final in the last year. We lost the WTC final in June, 2023. In November, 2023 we won hearts after 10 wins but couldn't win the Cup. I had said in Rajkot that we will win the heart and also the Cup on June 24 and install our national flag, and our captain installed the Indian flag," the secretary said.

Rohit, Kohli and Jadeja are expected to come back for the ODI series against Sri Lanka slated for August.

India will play six ODIs - three against Sri Lanka in an away series and three at home against England in early February before the Champions Trophy.

Trinbago Knight Riders sign Jemimah Rodrigues, Shikha Pandey for WCPL 2024

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Star Indian players Jemimah Rodrigues and Shikha Pandey were on Sunday roped in as international signings by the Trinbago Knight Riders for the upcoming season of the Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCPL).

Australians Meg Lanning and Jess Jonassen were their two other international signings.

"These four new additions to the squad have added a lot of depth, experience and firepower to the TKR Women's setup," the franchise said in a release while announcing their retained players as well as new signings ahead of the 2024 season.



TKR Women, the winners of the inaugural edition, have retained five Caribbean players -- captain Deandra Dottin, wicketkeeper Kycia Knight, speedster Shamila Connell, upcoming players Zaida

James and Samara Ramnath. This year the WCPL will be played from August 21-29.

Venky Mysore, CEO of Knight Riders Group, said: "We are very excited to be able to retain the core of our local

Caribbean players and sign up four world-renowned overseas players for this year's Women's CPL.

"Great to have Deandra Dottin captaining the team once again. She has been a fantastic leader of the side since the inaugural year, having played a crucial role both as captain and player since our title victory in 2022.

He said the addition of Rodrigues and Pandey will add depth to the team's lineup.

"Jemimah Rodrigues and Shikha Pandey will add volumes to the quality of the tournament, and we are very thankful to the BCCI for facilitating their first-ever appearance in the WCPL.

"The addition of these two big Indian names, along with super stars Meg Lanning and Jess Jonassen should excite cricket enthusiasts around the world, as we look forward to welcoming them all in TKR's red and black this August," said Mysore.

Jemimah, fresh from her back-to-back half-centuries against South Africa Women in the recently concluded one-off Test and the first T20I in Chennai, said: "This is the first time I'll be coming to the WCPL. I've played for India in the Caribbean quite a bit, but I'm really excited that I'll be representing the Knight Riders in WCPL. We all know the legacy that they have across the globe.

AGENCY

CALGARY: India's campaign at the Canada Open Super 500 badminton tournament ended after Priyanshu Rajawat suffered a straight-game loss to France's Alex Lanier in the men's singles semifinals here.

World No. 39 Rajawat went down 17-21 10-21 to Lanier, ranked 37th, in 45 minutes at the Markin MacPhail Centre.

The Indian had defeated Lanier at the Madrid Spain Masters qualification round last year in their only meeting.

Rajawat, who had stunned Anders Antonsen of Denmark in the quarterfi-



nals, made a positive start, opening up a 3-0 early lead but Lanier was quick to establish a 7-4 lead.

The two fought hard and Rajawat did grab the lead a few times but he couldn't sustain the pressure on his opponent, who reeled off five

straight points at 15-16 to eventually close out the opening game. Rajawat's game completely fell apart after the change of sides as Lanier zoomed to 8-2 and then 14-3, which proved decisive as the French shut the door on the Indian.

Jammu students shine at 7th J&K UT Kalaripayattu Championship



UMAA medal winner students posing with coach.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Sixteen students from the Untied Martial Arts Academy (UMAA) excelled at the 7th J&K UT Kalaripayattu Championship, held from July 5 to 8, 2024.

This championship, a prestigious event in the martial arts calendar, showcased the talent and dedication of participants from across Jammu and Kashmir, with nearly 200 students competing. Under the expert guidance of coaches Amir

Singh, Vikas Dhar, Neeraj Singh Manhas, and Surjeet Dogra, the Untied Martial Arts Academy has emerged as a leading institution approved by the J&K Kalaripayattu Association.

The academy's commitment to excellence was evident as its students showcased exceptional skills in this ancient martial art.

The competition witnessed outstanding performances from gold medalists, Mishty Sharma, Taakshra

Mahajan, Priyanjali Jaral, Nishant, and Kavish; silver medalists Parminder Kaur, Sukhmani Kaur, Amit Kumar, Leesha Inder Deep Kaur, Anant Dhar, and Rohit Bhagat; and bronze medalists, Mahir, Abhijyot, Aryan Mathur, Kamaldeep Singh, and Iqbal Singh Khalsa.

Chief Coach Amit Singh expressed his pride and congratulated all the medalists for their outstanding performances.

The academy's emphasis on rigorous training and skill development has clearly paid off, reaffirming its stature in promoting Kalaripayattu in the region.

GDA launches massive Anti-Polythene, Anti-Pollution Drive

STATE TIMES NEWS

BARAMULLA: Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) launched a comprehensive anti-polythene and anti-pollution drive on Sunday, aimed at enhancing environmental awareness and cleanliness in Tangmarg and Gulmarg.

The day-long campaign saw active participation from various departments, including the Executive Officer of the Municipality Tangmarg/Gulmarg, SHO Gulmarg/Tangmarg, officials from GDA, Inspector Motor Vehicle Department, Forest Protection Force focusing on both awareness and action.

The drive commenced in Tangmarg, where Chief



Chief Executive Officer GDA, Waseem Raja and others at a drive.

Executive Officer of GDA, Waseem Raja led a road awareness of drivers, passengers, and tourists. He emphasized the importance of maintaining Gulmarg's pristine environment, noting the detrimental effects of polythene in such an

eco-fragile zone.

He urged local visitors and tourists to refrain from using polythene in Gulmarg.

The inspection team conducted thorough checks on vehicles, ensuring the validity of pollution certificates and educating

tourists about the ban and punishment for carrying polythene into Gulmarg.

During the drive, the team checked hundreds of vehicles and imposed fines amounting to Rs 85,000 for various offences and violations. Five vehicles with expired fitness certificates, producing excessive smoke, were seized by Tangmarg Police under Section 129. The drive extended to Gulmarg, where GDA, in collaboration with the Tangmarg/Gulmarg Municipal Committee, launched a cleanliness drive at the Children's Park. Volunteers focused on cleaning the park, collecting polythene and plastic waste scattered in the area.

Throughout the drive, both CEO Waseem Raja and Volunteers emphasized the importance of utilizing the numerous dustbins installed around Gulmarg, encouraging visitors and tourists to keep the area clean. Raja stated that anyone found using polythene or disposing-off plastic waste irresponsibly in Gulmarg would face strict penalties as per the law.

The GDA remains committed to preserving the natural beauty of Gulmarg and ensuring a clean and sustainable environment for future generations. This initiative marks a significant step towards fostering community participation and environmental responsibility.

Innovative 'Pony Ambulance' Service revolutionizes Healthcare Support for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatris

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Directorate of Health Services Kashmir has introduced a 'Pony Ambulance' service for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024, providing critical healthcare support to pilgrims during their journey.

Conceived by Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Rathar under the guidance of Secretary Health

and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, this innovative initiative has been widely appreciated by yatris. The Pony Ambulance, a horse-mounted emergency response system equipped with medical kits and oxygen cylinders, accompanies pilgrims along both the Baltal and Pahalgam axis.

Trained personnel handle the Pony Ambulance, which swiftly responds to

any health issues faced by yatris during the yatra. This timely intervention has significantly reduced morbidity and mortality rates.

Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, Secretary Health and Medical Education, commended the health department for this innovative approach, stating, "We are committed to ensuring the well-being of Shri Amarnath Ji yatris. The Pony

Ambulance service has boosted pilgrims' confidence and comfort during the yatra." This pioneering effort demonstrates the health department's dedication to providing quality healthcare services in challenging terrain. The Pony Ambulance has set a new standard for emergency response in remote areas, showcasing Kashmir's healthcare innovation.