

# Asia Cup Final: Sri Lanka's Cup of glory as Pakistan get vanquished

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DUBAI: Sri Lanka, a country picking up pieces after the death of democracy while facing enormous financial turbulence, found 11 worthy heroes on a cricket pitch as Dasun Shanaka's unheralded bunch crushed Pakistan by 23 runs to win their sixth Asia Cup title here on Sunday.

It was a victory that was just not about cricket but way beyond that with much deeper historical and political importance. It was one for posterity as Sri Lanka first raised themselves from the dungeons to reach 170 for 6 from a hopeless 58 for 5 because of Bhanuka Rajapaksa's 45-ball-71, easily one of the best knocks under pressure in T20s in recent times. If that wasn't enough, Pakistan, who were cruising along at 93 for 2, were finally bowled out Pakistan for 147 as pacer Pramod Madushan (4/34 in 4 overs) and leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (3/27 in 4 overs) ensured that the few thousands of Sri Lankan fans out cheered the 20,000 odd Pakistan fans. The 17th over by



Hasaranga that served as Pakistan's death knell with three wickets falling in quick succession. It was Rajapaksa, who laid the foundation, Madushan, who built the structure and Hasaranga, who gave the finishing touches. Sri Lanka don't have prima donnas like the 'Men in Blue' but a team of good cricketers who have understood how to win crunch matches from the dead. The whipper-right-arm fast medium Madushan, who got Babar Azam (5) and Fakhar Zaman (0), gave Sri Lanka the upper-hand at the start of the

chase. While Babar was guilty off flicking a wide long hop down leg side straight into short fine leg fielder's hands, Fakhar dragged an angular delivery back onto stumps. Rizwan (55 off 49 balls) as usual played the sheet anchor's role hitting the odd boundaries as Iftikhar Ahmed (32 of 31 balls) started hitting after 10 overs but Madushan coming back for his second spell had him holed out in the deep. If there was one difference between the sides, it was fielding. While Pakistan were poor on the field dropping catches,