



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan's Ahmed Shehzad (L) congratulates teammate Hammad Azam who scored match-winning 92 against the West Indies in the Under-19 Cricket World Cup semifinal in Christchurch yesterday.

Azam steers Pakistan to final

AGENCIES, undated

All-rounder Hammad Azam, not for the first time, guided Pakistan to a four-wicket win over the West Indies at Christchurch on Monday to ensure their progress into the final of the Under-19 World Cup.

The second finalist will be determined in the other semifinal between Sri Lanka and Australia on Wednesday.

Pakistan won the toss and struck early with two wickets in the first four overs before West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite led the fightback as the Caribbean side posted 212 for eight in their 50 overs and looked good defend it after an early burst by their seamers had reduced Pakistan to 49 for 4. But Hammad, aided by valuable contributions from Rameez Aziz and Mohammad Waqas, fought hard with an unbeaten 92 to seal victory with nine balls to spare.

With conditions supporting the seamers early on, Jason Holder, fresh from a match-winning five-for against England in the quarterfinal, dented Pakistan at the start of their chase. He nipped out the openers Ahmed Shehzad and Pakistan's

highest scorer Babar Azam in no time. Pakistan captain Azeem Ghuman fell next after promising to revive his team in a 26-run stand with Ahsan Ali, but when both fell within a space of 14 runs, West Indies were favourites.

Hammad has been Pakistan's saviour with the bat in the tournament. He has proved extremely handy at the death, helping his side to nerve-wracking last-over wins against Bangladesh and India, but the challenge today was tougher. His partner Rameez held one end together, taking 81 balls for his 39 which included just two boundaries, but Hammad ensured the pressure of a creeping run rate did not hamper the stand. He found the fence with consistency and rotated the strike well to add 90 for the fifth wicket.

Rameez's dismissal gave West Indies another opening, but their hopes of choking the runs were thwarted by Hammad's attacking partnership with Mohammad Waqas. They added 64 in less than nine overs, with Waqas racing to 29 in 23 balls to get Pakistan within striking distance. Waqas holed out to long-on in the 48th over but Hammad swept a boundary three balls later to bring the equation

down to 6 off 13.

Pakistan were given a reprieve in the penultimate over when Hammad was dropped by Trevon Griffith in the deep, and Sarmad Bhatti ended the suspense by smashing Akeem Dewar over extra cover.

West Indies had been boosted by Kraigg Brathwaite, who continued his excellent run in the tournament, scoring his fourth half-century. His team had recovered from 7 for 2, thanks largely to a stand of 98 between him and captain Andre Creary. Amid a disciplined bowling performance from Bhatti and Raza Hassan, who took two wickets and effected a run out, there was some attacking batting towards the end of the innings by wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich that lifted West Indies to a competitive score. But it failed to measure up to Hammad's determination, which guided his team to its fourth World Cup final.

SCORES IN BRIEF
WEST INDIES U-19: 212 for 8 (Brathwaite 85, Dowrich 55; Bhatti 2-37)
PAKISTAN U-19: 213 for 6 (Hammad 92, Aziz 39; Holder 2-28)
Result: Pakistan won by four wickets.

Aussies to trial pink balls in D/N Test

CRICINFO, undated

Day-night Test cricket could be a step closer after Cricket Australia confirmed they would trial a pink ball under lights during next week's Futures League match at Adelaide Oval. The test-run is intended to determine how the pink ball holds up in the longer format of the game and how visible it is when used at night.

The three-day game between South Australia and Western Australia's second XIs will be played from 2.30pm until 9.30pm, starting next Tuesday, February 2. At the same time, a Futures League match in Brisbane will use a pink ball while a game in Melbourne will feature a white ball, with both those games to be played during the day only.

If the pink ball does not discolour too much, maintains the characteristics of a red ball throughout an innings and is visible to players and spectators under lights, it could bring day-night Tests much closer. The ICC and Cricket Australia are keen to play Test cricket under lights in an effort to increase the viewing audience and they are hopeful the first games could be played within two years.

Pak players should have been picked: Shah Rukh

CRICINFO, undated

Shah Rukh Khan, the co-owner of the Kolkata Knight Riders franchise, has spoken of the pressures of the IPL franchisees face in team selection, referring to the recent auction where no Pakistan player received the bid. He also referred to the demands of the Shiv Sena, a regional party, to block Australian players from the IPL.

Shah Rukh described Pakistan's exclusion from the IPL as "humiliating". "I think it's actually humiliating to me as a KKR owner that this has happened," he told NDTV. "We are known to be good, we are known to invite everyone, and we should have. And if there were any issues, they should have been put out earlier so that everything could happen respectfully."

"I truly believe that they should have been chosen. As a matter of fact, I'm not going to be the one who is opposite from what everyone else is saying but I wanted Abdul Razzaq. I think it was in the newspapers much earlier than even the auction started. Dada (Sourav Ganguly) was very keen."

Eleven Pakistan players were on the 66 shortlisted for the IPL auction in Mumbai, but none was picked. The players had received NOCs from the PCB to participate in the tournament after the Pakistan government's various ministries had cleared them to tour India. But the uncertainty over strained relations

between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks in November 2008 could have prompted the franchisees to wield restraint. Shah Rukh highlighted the concerns team owners face in such situations.

"I am not giving an excuse and I truly believe Pakistani players are the best T20 players in the world. They are the champions. They are wonderful. But somewhere down the line there is an issue and we cannot deny it," he said. "There is an issue, we cannot keep saying 'Oh this was wrong'. Yes maybe the way it was done was wrong, the way it is being carried out may be wrong. But you can't keep on saying Koi issue nahi hai yaar, woh aa jate (There isn't any issue, they could have come). There is an issue, let's not deny it. Every day we blame Pakistan, every day they blame us, it is an issue."

He also referred to the Shiv Sena's statements against the participation of Australian players in the IPL, as a protest over race attacks against Indian students in Australia. "There is going to be a section of people who have suddenly gotten up and have said, rightly or wrongly, 'Australians will not be allowed to play', Shah Rukh said. "So here is a set of people who are spending up to 70, 80, 90 crore rupees on trying to win a tournament and suddenly, even if you say this much to me, I'm like 'Uh-oh, so should I take or shouldn't I take him?'"

"So tomorrow, if we had known this, maybe even the Australians would not have been picked up. These issues always come prime on your head, the stakes are very high."

Dravid sent

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Indian board to make. There is nothing to worry about; everything is fine. He will be discharged tomorrow."

The incident occurred in the second over with the new ball, the 82nd of the innings, and with Dravid batting on 111 when he ducked into the bounce. The ball didn't climb as high as he thought it would and hit his ear guard as he tried to get his head out of the way.

India already have injury worries with Yuvraj Singh suffering a minor hand injury, which kept him away from batting at his normal position today. He was seen padded up when night-watcher Harbhajan Singh was batting.

Yuvraj was expected to visit the hospital in the evening but Arshad Ayub, the India team manager, confirmed that he will come out to bat tomorrow. "It is okay and will bat tomorrow," Ayub said.

Centurion Tendulkar

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had defensive fields as there had been fielders on the boundary lines. It was not that easy to get the scoreboard ticking at a rate that we would have liked. You have to be patient. It was a defensive field," he observed.

The batting maestro however didn't show too much respect to the ample supplies of short balls from the Bangladeshi bowlers.

"That doesn't mean much because the scoreboard reads something different," he said.

Making century is not a precious thing for a batsman like Tendulkar as he is approaching his century of international centuries as the first batsman in the world and that was the reason he was as modest as he could be when talking about his century.

"I don't believe in counting. I believe in playing and scoring. So I don't like to count, I just like to play," he said when asked on scoring his 45th century in Test cricket and 90th in international cricket.

Can Tigers

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realised that the weak link was Mahmudullah and so went after him to keep the board moving.

It was not the kind of batting that makes spectators sit on the edge of their seats just waiting to get up but it was where the spectators were also certain that unless another unexpected delivery were produced these two would not be moved. That's exactly what happened. Dravid after getting his 29th Test century was in two minds whether to duck or sway out of the way of a short ball and took a blow on the side of the helmet and retired hurt. Tendulkar got out when he looked set for a double and that started a bit of a collapse with Vijay also getting out shortly thereafter. But while Dravid and Tendulkar were stitching their 222 run partnership it was an exhibition of how Test innings ought to be played.

We will soon find out if the Bangladesh batsmen have learnt anything from these two masters for there couldn't have been better teachers than Dravid and Tendulkar.

AMEx OPEN GOLF

Sanjay takes lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Sanjay Kumar of Lucknow posted a magnificent bogey-free 66 to take the lead on day one of the PGTI's American Express Bangladesh Open 2010 at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday, says a press release.

Bangladesh's Milton Ahmed is in second position at five under 67. Milton fired six birdies and a lone bogey. The highest placed Bangladeshi after round one, made 15 regulations on Monday and sank a couple of 15 footers for birdies on the sixth and 10th.

Sanjay, the joint runner-up from last year, excelled with his short game to be placed at the top of the leaderboard after round one. He found the edge of the green with his second shot on the par five third. He then made a chip-putt for birdie. Sanjay followed this up with another chip-putt from the edge for birdie on the par four fifth hole. The 38-year-old then converted a couple of 10 feet putts for birdies on the sixth and ninth. Two more birdies on the 14th and 15th helped him finish the day at six under 66.

Sanjay said, "I drove the ball well and hit some really good tee shots today. Besides I also hit an extremely good bunker shot on the fourth to save par. Today's round was an excellent one considering that I am playing with a new set of clubs and am yet to get used to it."

Aussies eye series

Third ODI against Pakistan today

CRICINFO, undated

Australia can wrap up the series with victory in Adelaide after going 2-0 up at the SCG, where they enjoyed their third-greatest winning margin over Pakistan in terms of runs with a 140-run triumph. The visitors will find it difficult to come back in the five-match series but the first step must be to win on Australia Day to ensure the final two games in Perth do not become dead rubbers. To achieve that, they will need a much stronger batting performance than they showed in Sydney, where they were skittled for 127 chasing 268.

Pakistan continue to be haunted by questions over the captaincy. Mohammad Yousuf remains nominally in charge but according to the PCB, won't be for much longer, and Younus Khan was having some say in bowling changes and field placements at the SCG. Captaincy turmoil is a familiar feature of Pakistan sides and it certainly isn't helping their on-field performances. As well as lifting their batting game, they must find a way to restrict Australia through the middle overs and if possible dismiss the hosts, who have lost only five and six wickets in each of the first two ODIs.

Umar Akmal has the type of game that should be suited to the 50-over format but he has not yet fired in this series. His past four ODI innings read 9, 12, 23 and 0, and he will be searching for a big effort to ease any pressure over his place in the middle order. Adelaide, where the bounce is true and the square boundaries are short, is as good a place as any to turn his form around.

After several years of being a bits-and-pieces

player, Cameron White has finally found his role in Australia's one-day team as a reliable and powerful No. 5. Since the start of the tour of India in October, White has averaged 47.25 in one-day internationals and has passed fifty in five of eight innings. He started this series with 105 and 55 and on a good batting surface at Adelaide Oval he could easily take the series out of Pakistan's hands with another brutal display.

Australia are unlikely to make any changes to their winning side unless forced to and the only doubt surrounds Peter Siddle, who reported back soreness following Sunday's win. The Queensland fast man Ryan Harris has been added to the squad as a shadow player and could add to the side as ODI appearance if Siddle cannot play. "Peter Siddle experienced some back soreness after last night's ODI in Sydney," Alex Kountouris, the team physio said. "He'll be assessed during the course of the day tomorrow when a decision on his availability for the match at Adelaide Oval will be made."

Pakistan lost Mohammad Asif to a hand injury sustained while fielding in the first ODI at the Gabba and he was replaced in Sydney by Umar Gul. They will be hoping Asif has recovered in time for the third match, while the poor batting in Sydney will have Fawad Alam and Khalid Latif thinking about a possible call-up.

SQUADS
AUSTRALIA (probable): Shane Watson, Shaun Marsh, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke, Cameron White, Michael Hussey, Brad Haddin, Nathan Hauritz, Clint McKay, Peter Siddle/Ryan Harris, Doug Bollinger.
PAKISTAN (possible): Salman Butt, Kamran Akmal, Younus Khan, Mohammad Yousuf (captain), Umar Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Shahid Afridi, Rana Navedul Hasan, Umar Gul, Mohammed Aamer, Saeed Ajmal.

AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

AP, Melbourne

A look at Monday's eighth day of the Australian Open tennis championships:

WEATHER: Sunny and windy. High of 24 Celsius (75 Fahrenheit).

ATTENDANCE: Day: 31,418. Night: 17,655. Total: 49,073.

WINNERS: Men: No. 1 Roger Federer, No. 3 Novak Djokovic, No. 6 Nikolay Davydenko, No. 10 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.
 Women: No. 1 Serena Williams, No. 6 Venus Williams, No. 7 Victoria Azarenka, No. 16 Li Na.
LOSERS: Men: No. 9 Fernando Verdasco, No. 22 Lleyton Hewitt, No. 25 Nicolas Pietrangeli.
 Women: No. 4 Caroline Wozniacki, No. 9 Vera Zvonareva, No. 13 Samantha Stosur, No. 17 Francesca Schiavone.

STAT OF THE DAY: 34. Number of consecutive years -- since 1977 -- that at least one American woman has advanced to the Australian Open quarterfinals.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "You don't need to rub it in, they know." Federer when told in front of the Rod Laver Arena crowd that he had beaten Hewitt 15 times in a row.

On Court Tuesday: Quarterfinals: No. 2 Rafael Nadal vs No. 5 Andy Murray; No. 7 Andy Roddick vs No. 14 Marin Cilic. Justine Henin vs No. 19 Nadia Petrova, Zheng Jie vs Maria Kirilenko.

Tuesday's Forecast: Clear then cloudy, possible showers in late afternoon and evening. High of 30 Celsius (86 Fahrenheit).

Roger, Nikolay in qtrs

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tougher against Italian 17th seed Francesca Schiavone, losing the first set before bouncing back for a 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 win.

They join Li, Justine Henin, Nadia Petrova, Maria Kirilenko and Zheng Jie in the last eight.

Venus is in her 11th

Australian Open campaign but is yet to win the singles crown, in stark contrast to Serena.

But the elder Williams is not beating herself up about her comparative lack of success, insisting a major part of her game plan was staying positive.

She said she could break her Australian drought this



year.

"Yeah, I'm ready to go and I feel very good," said Venus, who has won five Wimbledon and two US Open titles.

She faces Li next after the 16th seed upset Danish fourth seed Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, 6-3.

Her victory broke new ground for Chinese tennis with the 27-year-old joining compatriot Zheng in the last eight, the first time two Chinese players have reached that stage of a Grand Slam.

Li is looking forward to meeting Venus, who she beat in their only previous match at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"It was a good experience for me, for my tennis," she said of the Olympic win. "But I just want to forget because I play her again. I want to look forward."

Djokovic was impressive in his rout of Kubot.

He struggled with his form in the opening two rounds, but has moved up a gear and is back with the touch he displayed in the second half of last year.

"I think the first two sets I was very dominant on the court, then he lifted up his level of the game a little bit," he said.

"In general, I was very happy with the way I performed today."

PHOTO: AFP

Nikolay Davydenko of Russia plays a backhand return against Fernando Verdasco of Spain in the fourth round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. Davydenko won 6-2, 7-5, 4-6, 6-7, 6-3.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Platter	1 Accomplished
5 Upper limb	2 Altar
8 — mater	3 Affirmative
12 Concept	4 Stitch
13 Kiwi's bygone kin	5 Four-poster
14 Bathday cake?	6 Feature
15 Petula Clark classic	7 Out of control
17 Dorothy's destination	8 Tiar
18 Acorn maker	9 Guitar's cousin
19 Window in a roof	10 Religious retreat
21 Take as one's own	11 Weaver's apparatus
24 Pop flavor	12 Jerry Herman heroine
25 Mr. Crockett	13 Light-colored uniforms
26 Distinguishing trait	14 Country song?
30 Corroded	15 Forefront
31 Old Aegean region	16 Sleeping
32 Greet the villain	17 Memorandum
	18 Common subject?
	19 Actor Clive
	20 Eggs
	21 Citric cooler
	22 Tell a tale
	23 Allow

Solution time: 21 mins.

P	E	P	A	B	A	C	A	P	E	A
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Q	U	I	C	K	L	I	M	E	I	R
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51					52				53		

CRYPTOQUIP

X G H H F R V J N D D O R G C D

B V J E W D U S D H Z R C K D C K D B

C K J D O W U W C F C R E D B C

B V J U U B: "C K J S D Z W E X N G W C."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU COULD CALL A CERTAIN IMPORTANT ATMOSPHERIC LAYER THE OZONE ZONE?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T