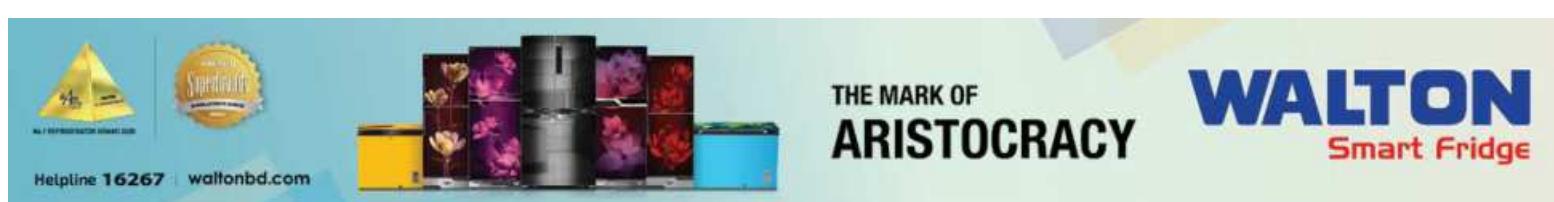


SPORT



'WE'VE GOT OUR MOJO BACK'

AFP, Dubai

KL Rahul's 50 off 19 balls helped India stay alive in the Twenty20 World Cup with an eight-wicket thrashing of Scotland inside seven overs on Friday as birthday boy skipper Virat Kohli claimed: "We've got our mojo back."

Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami took three wickets each to help bowl out Scotland for 85 in 17.4 overs after India put the opposition into bat in the Super 12 contest in Dubai.

Rahul and Rohit Sharma, who hit 30, then took the Scotland bowling apart as India raced to their target in 6.3 overs to radically improve their run-rate.

They still need to win their last game against Namibia on Monday and depend on the result of Sunday's New Zealand-Afghanistan match to have any chance of making the final four.

Rahul smashed six fours and three sixes in his batting blitz as he raised the fifty in 18 balls before getting out to Mark Watt.

Sharma fell lbw to Brad Wheal who ended the 70-run opening stand.



SCORES IN BRIEF

SCOTLAND

85 all out in 17.4 overs
(Munsey 24, Leask 21; Shami

3-15, Jadeja 3-15)

INDIA

89 for 2 in 6.3 overs

(Rahul 50, Rohit 30; Watt 1-20)

RESULT

India won by 2 wickets

PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH

Ravindra Jadeja

Suryakumar Yadav hit the winning six with Kohli, on his 33rd birthday, relishing the huge win at the other end.

"A dominating performance. It was something we were striving for again," said Kohli after a second successive win followed defeats to old rivals Pakistan and New Zealand. "I don't want to say too much about today because we know how we can play. These little things in T20 cricket (toss, conditions) matter and we're glad to be back in our mojo."

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah bowled Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer on 24.

Jadeja made an instant impact with twin strikes to send back Richie Berrington, bowled without scoring a run, and Matthew Cross trapped lbw for two.

With Scotland's top four back in the dugout at 29, Calum MacLeod and Michael Leask put up some resistance during a 29-run stand. Jadeja sent back Leask lbw for 21 and Ashwin got Chris Greaves for one.

MacLeod and Mark Watt attempted to bring some respect to the total but Shami returned to pick up two wickets in one over and Bumrah wrapped up the innings in 17.4 overs.

Saber lashes out at 'most incompetent' Hassan

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury called Nazmul Hassan, the current president of the board, 'incompetent' and blamed him for Bangladesh's awful showing at the ongoing T20 World Cup in the UAE.

Bangladesh have garnered criticism from all around the globe after the Tigers lost six of their eight matches played in the T20 World Cup.

The two matches that the Mahmudullah Riyad-led side won were against lightweights Papua New Guinea and co-hosts Oman while they lost against associates Scotland and also all five of their Super 12 clashes on the trot.

The shock defeat against Scotland in their tournament opener also meant the Tigers progressed to the Super 12s as runners-up from a group of low-ranked sides.



President has also been the most incompetent," tweeted Saber after Bangladesh were bundled out for just 73 -- their second-lowest T20I total -- during their eight-wicket thumping

at the hands of Australia yesterday.

Saber, who acted as the BCB president from 1996-2001, also said that Hassan would only pass the blame on others.

"It's always someone else's fault as he [Hassan] has run our cricket to the ground. Shame that we have a shameless @BCBtigers," added Saber.



Youngsters Afif Hossain and Shoriful Islam were among the Bangladesh players who returned to the country yesterday after a disastrous T20 World Cup. The Tigers returned to the capital on two different flights. However, four senior cricketers along with the members of the coaching staff stayed back in the UAE and will return in a week.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

New Zealand boost semis hopes

AFP, Sharjah

New Zealand defeated Namibia by 52 runs on Friday to move closer to the T20 World Cup semi-finals. Glenn Phillips and Jimmy Neesham plundered 67 runs off the last four overs as New Zealand made 163-4 after being put into bat. In reply, Namibia were well set at 47-0 in the eighth over before they faded to 111-7.

New Zealand have six points, two ahead of Afghanistan and four in front of India who must win both their remaining games, and improve their run rate, to have any chance of making the semi-finals.

Pakistan have already booked their place in the last four from Group 2.

David Wiese and 18 taken from a wild 10-ball final over from JJ Smit. Namibia had limited New Zealand to 62-2 at the halfway point after winning the toss and electing to field.

One of the early wickets to fall was opener Martin Guptill who had smashed 93 in the 16-run win over Scotland last time out. Namibia saw openers Michael van Linen (25) and Stephan Baard (21) make a steady start, helping their team reach 56-3 at the midway point.

But experienced seamers Tim Southee (2-15) and Trent Boult (2-20) applied the brakes as Namibia were only able to add 55 more runs off the last 10 overs.

"Afghanistan are a really, really strong



"We knew what to expect here, it was a real scrap," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. Phillips hit an undefeated 39 off 21 balls with one four and three sixes while man-of-the-match Neesham made 35 from 23 deliveries with a boundary and two sixes.

The Black Caps, who face fellow semi-final hopefuls Afghanistan on Sunday, were struggling at 96-4 off 16 overs after being put into bat by Namibia, the lowest-ranked team in the tournament.

But Namibia lost their discipline with 21 coming off the 18th over bowled by

Australia face slippery Windies in MUST-WIN GAME

AGENCIES

With their campaign back on track with a big win against Bangladesh, Australia will hope to avoid slipping up against West Indies in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

After losing to arch-rival England last week, Australia bounced back with a record eight-wicket win over Bangladesh on Thursday. The margin of the victory boosted their net run-rate to +1.031 (from -0.627). Still, a win may not be enough if the Proteas manage to beat England on Saturday by a margin that would lift its NRR past Australia's.

If lucky, a loss against West Indies still could hand Australia a semifinal spot if England make it five out of five, beating South Africa.

So, there's a lot at stake for both Australia and South Africa. Australia currently occupy the second spot in the points table.

Facing such an uncertain scenario, the Australians cannot afford to be complacent. Moreover, a bruised and battered West Indies

would look to salvage some pride and bow out of the showpiece with a win.

Australia's last semifinal appearance in the T20 World Cup was in 2012 when they were eliminated by eventual champion West Indies.

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The two-time champion West Indies failed to live up to their reputation in this T20 World Cup as they relied heavily on ageing stars like Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo, Andre Russell and Kieron

Pollard. Australia, on the other hand, are beginning to peak at the right time in their bid to win their only missing title.

The bowling attack came to the fore in their eight-wicket win over Bangladesh that came with 82 balls to spare -- the biggest T20I win between two full member teams. While the pace duo of Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc gave the opening blows, leg-spinner Adam Zampa polished off the tail in route to a career-best 5 for 19.

Even Glenn Maxwell (2-0-6-1) was tidy with his part-time off-spin and the team would only hope that he starts firing with his bat also. The inconsistent top-order also got some boost with the return of Mitchell Marsh at No 3. Marsh blasted 16 not out off five balls, an innings that included a six off Taskin Ahmed, to seal the issue after skipper Finch laid the foundation with a 40.

The team would hope that David Warner and Maxwell get into the groove against the misfiring Windies as they may stick to an unchanged XI.