

INDIA SMASH RECORDS IN ONE-SIDED FINAL

India wreaked havoc at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday, smashing a plethora of records on their way to clinching a record third T20 World Cup title with a 96-run victory in an utterly one-sided final against New Zealand. From piling up a record 255 for five to bundling out New Zealand for 159 in 19 overs, the co-hosts made the Black Caps look like an ordinary team at the largest-capacity cricket stadium in the world.

In the 10th edition of the T20 World Cup, India became the first side to win the title as a host nation.

India also became the first team to defend the T20 World Cup title and the first team to win it three times (2007, 2024, 2026). England (2010, 2022) and the West Indies (2012, 2016) have both won the tournament twice.



The 96-run win is the largest margin of victory by runs in a T20 World Cup final, surpassing the West Indies' 36-run win over Sri Lanka in 2012.

India's 255 for five is the highest total in a T20 World Cup final and the third-highest overall in the tournament's history.

This was the seventh time India crossed the 250-run mark in T20Is -- the most by any team in the format. It was also India's fourth 250-plus total in 2026, the most by any team in a calendar year.

India raced to 100 in just 7.2 overs, the fastest team hundred in a T20 World Cup knockout match.

India smashed 37 boundaries in the innings -- the most in a T20 World Cup final. That included 18 sixes, also the highest in a T20 World Cup title decider.

Opener Sanju Samson's 89 off 46 balls is the highest individual score in a T20 World Cup final, surpassing the 85 not out by Marlon Samuels in 2016 and the 85 by Kane Williamson in 2021.

The 105-run second-wicket stand between Samson and Ishan Kishan (54 off 25) is the second 100-plus partnership in a T20 World Cup final, behind the 111-run stand between Craig Kieswetter and Kevin Pietersen against Australia in 2010.



India's Jasprit Bumrah, the wrecker-in-chief of the ICC T20 World Cup final, celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra during the one-sided match at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

'Bumrah is a once-in-a-generation bowler'

AGENCIES

India captain Suryakumar Yadav heaped praise on pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah after India's historic 96-run victory over New Zealand in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup yesterday. Speaking at the post-match presentation, Suryakumar lauded Bumrah's impact and composure on the big stage. "Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma are top players and we knew they would do something special, and they did it in the final," he said. "Bumrah is a once-in-a-generation bowler. I can call him a national treasure. He knows exactly what needs to be done and he is the best in the business."

Suryakumar also credited the

team's consistency over the past two years. "We have been playing good cricket in the last two years and we just wanted to follow the good habits we built during the 2024 World Cup. The boys responded brilliantly. It's really important to understand what players are capable of, and I always believed they had match-winning abilities. The timing was perfect."

India's triumph also helped erase the painful memories of the 2023 ODI World Cup final loss at the same venue. The team capped off a dominant campaign, losing just one match across the last two T20 World Cups.

India's powerful batting lineup overwhelmed New Zealand, posting 255-

5 -- the highest total ever in a T20 World Cup final. In reply, the Black Caps were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs.

The win made India the first team to successfully defend a T20 World Cup title, the first to win the tournament on home soil, and the first to claim three T20 World Cup trophies.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner admitted his side was second best.

"Today we were outplayed by a great team in front of a fantastic crowd. Playing a home World Cup brings pressure, but Suryakumar and his team should be very proud. We fought hard in the Super Eight and the semi-final, but tonight India were simply better," he said.

"Feels like a dream. Very happy and grateful. Out of words, out of emotions. [On his three fifties, thought process] To be honest, I started one-two years before. When I was in the 2024 World Cup team where I didn't play, I kept visualising, kept on working, and this was exactly what I wanted to do. After the New Zealand series, I was broken. My dreams were completely shattered, and I was thinking what I could do. But God had different plans. And I was rewarded for being brave enough to dream."

SANJU SAMSON, Player of the Tournament

"[On what the win means] Feels extremely special because I've played one final in my home venue but couldn't win that one, but today I won. Knew the wicket was a flat one, so I had to use all my experience. Before this tournament, I was in that zone where I felt I was trying too hard because I was bowling well but felt I was trying too hard. This tournament, I just tried to let the game come to me, and that worked really well."

JASPRIT BUMRAH, Player of the Match

A tie with a lot on the line

SPORTS REPORTER

Debutant Bangladesh are set to face Uzbekistan, the side closest to the women in red and green in terms of rankings in their group, in a Group B encounter of the AFC Women's Asian Cup at the Perth Rectangular Stadium today, with a number of achievements in sight.

The first two group games proved to be a 'David and Goliath' affair for Peter Butler's charges. Bangladesh fought hard in a 2-0 defeat against defending champions China before faltering to a 5-0 thrashing against three-time champions DPR Korea.

The 49th-ranked Uzbekistan still pose an uphill challenge for the 112th-ranked Bangladesh. However, Afeida Khandaker and company will feel this is a match they can target to secure their maiden win in the tournament, a result that could see them advance to the quarterfinals -- which would also confirm their place in the qualifiers for the 2028 Summer Olympics.

A victory today would also open a potential pathway for Bangladesh to the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup. The top six teams in the ongoing Asian Cup qualify directly for the World Cup, while the seventh and eighth-placed teams enter the continental playoffs for the quadrennial event.

However, Bangladesh's chances of progressing as one of the two best third-placed teams across the three groups remain extremely slim. Bangladesh, currently third in Group B with zero points and a goal difference of -7, are competing with the third-placed teams from the other groups -- the Philippines in Group A and Vietnam in Group C.

Both the Philippines (-2 GD) and Vietnam (0 GD) have three points each, giving them a clear



edge. For Bangladesh to advance, they would either need to beat Uzbekistan by at least a six-goal margin or hope that Japan beat Vietnam by a significant margin in their final group game.

However, Butler believes rankings will matter little once the match begins.

"Ranking is one thing, but when you go on that pitch, it's 11 vs 11. They have come through so much. Tomorrow is a milestone for Bangladesh football and we will go there to win and give our best," said the 59-year-old.

Despite the daunting equation, Bangladesh can also draw encouragement from the fact that Uzbekistan themselves struggled during qualification, needing penalties to overcome Nepal after being pushed hard.

"I watched the Nepal game, and I think they played really well. Uzbekistan are very strong, powerful athletes. But I think our technical ability and our ability to keep the ball can cause them problems. We've got to be brave; we've got to be bold," an optimistic Butler said.

Bangladesh will now hope Butler's words translate into action as the girls aim for at least a brave showing today.

Fresh guard for a rivalry in pause

ASHEFAQ UL ALAM

Batters celebrating after reaching a milestone, be it a half-century, century or further increments of fifty, is commonplace in cricket, almost everyone does it.

Some jump up and down in elation, others calmly wave the bat to acknowledge their teammates and fans, a few fall to the ground to thank the Almighty and a handful stare into the heavens in gratitude.

There are, however, some players who follow up the celebration by taking fresh guard as a mental exercise to calm their nerves and to start their innings anew.

In a symbolic way, Pakistan's wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan will get to do that with his ODI career, as he is set to play his 10th ODI in the same venue and against the same opponents he had started his journey in the format nearly 11 years ago.

Rizwan had made his ODI debut for Pakistan in April 17, 2015, in the first game of a three-match ODI series against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka.

That series is fondly remembered in the annals of Bangladesh cricket as the Tigers won it 3-0 and it kicked off

the trifecta of home series wins which included triumphs over India and South Africa.

Surprisingly, Bangladesh and Pakistan have not had a 50-overs bilateral series since then, facing off only four times in the last 11 years in the format only in multi-team events.



During the same period, Pakistan have had nine ODI encounters against India -- even with no bilateral cricketing relations between them -- more than double of the matches against Bangladesh.

It's not as if Bangladesh and Pakistan have not had bilateral relations at all. During this period, Bangladesh have toured Pakistan four times and Pakistan have toured Bangladesh twice, but only for Tests and T20Is -- which could either be

pure co-incidence or a sign of the declining relevance of the ODI format.

In the 2015 series, Bangladesh were a side on the up, riding the high of their maiden quarterfinal finish in a World Cup earlier that year, with the 'Fab Five' at their peaks while Pakistan were a side in rebuild.

The games were one-sided, with Tamim Iqbal making the series his own with two centuries and a fifty.

As fate would have it, Pakistan are seemingly in the midst of what appears to be another reset, with six uncapped players getting picked in the 15-member squad and the experienced Babar Azam axed.

However, Bangladesh are no longer the well-oiled machine they once were in the 50-over format. The Mehidy Hasan Miraz-led side have lost their identity as an ODI side and are trying to regain their form in time with a direct entry into next year's ODI World Cup still on the line.

Rizwan, an experienced campaigner now, landed in Dhaka in the early hours of Sunday alongside the other Pakistan cricketers. Most likely, he will take guard for his 10th ODI somewhere along the series and hopefully, he won't have to wait till his 20th ODI to play another 50-over Bangladesh-Pakistan ODI series.

Just a goal away from 900

Goals, milestones, and trophies -- these remain a constant for Lionel Messi, and the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner moved to the brink of yet another incredible feat on Saturday. With a deft chipped finish in the first half of Inter Miami's 2-1 victory over D.C. United in Major League Soccer, Messi took his career goal tally to 899, leaving him just one away from reaching the 900-goal milestone. This was Messi's 80th goal for Miami, while he netted 672 goals for Barcelona, 32 at PSG, along with a further 115 international goals for Argentina. The 38-year-old remains only behind Cristiano Ronaldo, who has 965 career goals, on the all-time top goalscorers' list. PHOTO: AFP



94 DAYS TO GO



USA and the trend of firsts

The 1994 FIFA World Cup in the United States introduced the three-points-for-a-win rule. Previously, a victory earned only two points. This time, the United States will serve as a co-host of the tournament, alongside Mexico and Canada, when the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicks off. The upcoming edition is also set to witness another 'first' in the history of the World Cup. A total of 48 teams will participate, marking the highest number of teams ever to take part in the quadrennial event.

** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: "The silence of the Maracana"