



Women's Asia Cup T20: India crush Pak by 7 wickets, spinners lead the rout

Indian spinners skittle out Pakistan for 55 in just 18.1 overs

DUBAI, SEP 05: *Young spin twins Shree Charani and Prema Rawat strangled Pakistan with deadly spells as India trampled all over their arch-rivals, winning a lopsided Women's Asia Cup T20 contest by seven wickets here on Saturday.*

Harmanpreet Kaur, who become the first international captain (men or women) to lead the country in 150 T20Is, couldn't have been more pleased to find her spinners skittling out Pakistan for 55 in just 18.1 overs—their lowest-ever total in the shortest format.

Fittingly, she finished the game with a regal six down the ground.

India's spinners -- 22-year-old left-arm orthodox Charani (3/7 in 4 overs), 24-year-old leg-break bowler Prema (3/9 in 4 overs) and part-time wrist spinner Shafali Verma (1/10 in 3 overs) completely dismantled the Pakistan batting.

Deepti Sharma (2/5 in 3.1 overs) completed the formalities.

India completed the chase in 8.4 overs despite losing Shafali Verma (12), Smriti Mandhana (9) and Pratika Rawal (4) cheaply to Pakistan skipper Fatima Sana.

Harmanpreet (18 n.o.) and Deepti (12 n.o.) used all their experience to calm the nerves after some initial jitters. With no scoreboard pressure, Pakistan bowlers never had any chance as



such to create an upset.

Indian women would have expected a bit of practice before their semi-finals but such was the plight of Pakistani batters that once again it became a 'No Contest'. In the history of T20 Asia Cup, India have won seven games to Pakistan's one.

Earlier, opting to bat, Pakistan did start confidently reaching 27 for no loss in little over four overs with openers Muneeba Ali (13) and Shawaal Zulfiqar (14) facing the seamers with ease but none of the other batters were able to reach double figures in an embarrassing display of ineptitude.

The two wrist spinners, Shafali and Prema, didn't try to turn and kept attacking the stumps with relentless accuracy. By the time, Deepti came in to bowl, Pakistan women had al-

ready thrown in the towel.

In 18.1 overs, Indian bowlers delivered an astounding 78 dot balls.

Once, Harmanpreet Kaur, captaining the country for the 150th time in T20Is, gauged that the pitch was offering turn, she introduced the spinners right away and got due dividends. Suddenly Pakistan lost six wickets for the addition of nine runs to totter at 36 for 6 after the end of 10 overs.

Strangled for runs, Muneeba tried to shuffle towards leg stump to make room and was beaten all ends up.

Charani then got into the act as she extracted appreciable turn and bounce at the same time. Gull Feroza (0) tried to hit her against the turn to get caught at short third while Zulfiqar missed a sweep shot to be adjudged plumb in-front.

Ayesha Zafar (2) was strangled as she tried to break the shackles, only to lob an easy catch to Harmanpreet at mid-on.

Sadaf Shamas (3) tried to hit her way out on a difficult track against Prema, who bowled straight and hit the stumps.

Pakistan's biggest hope, skipper Fatima Sana (0) got a classical off-break from Deepti Sharma that hit her flush on the pads and could have hit the leg-middle line.

Eyman Fatima (5) and Umm-e Hani (6) were involved in a horrible mix-up leading to the former being run-out at the non-striker's end.

Hani also perished like many of her teammates trying a sweep without even having an iota of idea about the length of the delivery. By then the contest was over even before India came out to bat.

Women's Asia Cup: Prema, Charani shine as India skittle out Pakistan for 55

DUBAI [UAE], SEPTEMBER 5 : Fiery spells from Shree Charani and Prema Rawat helped India dominate arch-rivals Pakistan, skittling them out for just 55 runs in their final league-stage women's Asia Cup clash at Dubai on Saturday.

After Pakistan opted to bat first, openers Muneeba Ali and Shawaal Zulfiqar stitched a 27-run stand, but from there, it was a slow-burning punishment unleashed on Pakistani batters, who were skittled out for just 55 in 18.1 overs.

After Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat first, Muneeba Ali and Shawaal Zulfiqar were cautious in the start, with Zulfiqar taking two overs to find the boundary.

In the third over, Pratika Rawal dropped a sitter off Kranti Gaud's bowling, giving Muneeba Ali a lifeline.

The duo managed to get a boundary each, but Shafali Varma clean bowled Muneeba for a 15-ball 13.



Pakistan was 27/1 in 4.3 overs.

The next over bowled by Shree Charani saw her get two wickets, with Gull Feroza caught by Nandini Sharma at backward point for a three-ball duck and then Zulfiqar trapped lbw

for a run-a-ball 14 to end the over. Pakistan was 29/3 in six overs.

Spin continued to dominate the proceedings, with Shree getting her third wicket in the eighth over, removing Ayesha Zafar (2), while Prema Rawat got the

wicket of Ayesha Zafar (3) and Deepti Sharma got the wicket of skipper Fatima Sana for a seven-ball duck. Pakistan was down and out at 35/6 in 9.1 overs.

Halfway through, Pakistan was 36/6, with Eyman Fatima (0*) and Umm-e-Hani (1*) unbeaten.

Pakistan's downslide continued, as Eyman Fatima (5) was run out by Bharti Fulmali and Deepti Sharma, sinking to 45/7 in 13.1 overs.

Prema Rawat got some success, as she added two more wickets to her tally, removing Umm-e-Hani (6) and Umm-e-Hani (0), sinking Pakistan to 54/9 in 16.3 overs.

Deepti Sharma got the final wicket, removing Tuba Hassan for nine in 16 balls, Pakistan was skittled out for 55 in 18.1 overs.

Charani (3/7) and Prema (3/9) were exceptional in their four-over spells, with Deepti getting two wickets and Shafali getting one. (ANI)

From World Cup to junior league, Haryana leads women's hockey



HISAR, SEP 05: Haryana has emerged as the new centre of power in Indian women's hockey. The girls from Haryana are not only making waves at the international level — with the Indian team, which comprised 35 percent Haryana players, achieving a best-ever fifth-place finish at the World Cup — but they are also dominating the junior circuit at the national level.

Recently, Haryana became the champion of the 16th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship in Pune. In fact, the Haryana team got sweet revenge for last year's final defeat, beating defending champions Jharkhand 2-1 in the final. Haryana had lost to Jharkhand by the same scoreline in last year's final at Kakinada.

Haryana coach Azad Singh Malik said the state had won the national title after a gap of three years. Haryana had also won the championship in 2021 and 2022. In the previous three editions, the team had finished runners-up once and third twice.

The Haryana team had remained unbeaten throughout the junior national championship that concluded last week. The team opened its campaign with a 10-1 win over Bengal and followed it with a 3-0 victory over Odisha. In the

quarter-final, Haryana defeated Chandigarh 3-1 before cruising to an 8-0 victory over Chhattisgarh in the semi-final.

In the final, Jharkhand took the lead through Mundri Saroj in the 19th minute. Haryana equalised when Bhavya converted a penalty corner in the 23rd minute. Khushi then scored in the 42nd minute to put Haryana ahead and seal the title, Malik said.

The coach said the team had steadily emerged as a strong force at the national level and the current squad had proved its mettle in a tournament featuring several promising young players. Bhavya was named the Player of the Tournament, while Supreet was adjudged the Best Forward.

The Haryana team comprised Ishika, Bhavya, Jasmine, Tamanna, Sakshi and Khushi from Sonapat; Deepika, Himanshi, Kirti, Aditi, Anjali, Diksha, Shashi Khasa, Durga and Vanshishika from Hisar; and Anjani and Sukhpreet Kaur from Kurukshetra.

Importantly, most of these players are from the rural background belonging to families of farming and working classes.

The title assumed significance as the Haryana women's hockey team has achieved it despite the lack of adequate facilities, including qualified coaches

and infrastructure at the grassroots level, say hockey lovers.

The performance of the players from Haryana indicated the potential to play an important role in taking the national team to the top at the international level, including the World Cup and the Olympics, they maintained.

Within the state of Haryana, the women hockey has expanded to Sonapat and Hisar, in addition to its traditional centre, Shahbad, in the Kurukshetra district in recent years. A majority of the players in the present junior team are from these three districts, which include eight players from Sonapat and several others from Hisar and Kurukshetra.

Former Indian captain and coach Pritam Siwach, who trains young players at her academy in Sonapat, said the achievements of Haryana's hockey players had been overshadowed by the popularity of other sports and needed greater promotion.

She said the current junior squad from Haryana had several players who could soon make debut in the senior Indian team.

"About five or six players are expected to make their transition in the Indian team next year, while some of the younger players also have the potential to make

it later on," she said. The players with the national team potential are Bhavya, Ishika, Khushi, Tamanna, Shashi and Supreet.

Siwach said the players were now receiving support from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Sonapat and increasing competition had contributed to the emergence of a stronger pool of players. However, she said the lack of grassroots facilities, particularly qualified coaches in the districts and astroturfs, could further harness the Haryana's potential.

The success of Haryana's junior team comes in the backdrop of best ever performance of the Indian team in the women hockey world cup with fifth position recently. The Hockey India has announced a reward of Rs 50 lakh to the Indian women's hockey team for the same.

Notably, as many as seven of the 20 players in the Indian squad for the Asian Games are from Haryana, accounting for 35 per cent of the team which has headed to Japan including goalkeeper Savita Punia from Sirsa; defenders Jyoti and Shilpi Dabas from Shahbad in Kurukshetra; midfielders Sakshi Rana and Neha Goyal from Sonapat; and forwards Navneet Kaur from Shahbad and Deepika from Hisar.

China Masters: Satwik, Chirag storm into final; one step away from season's 2nd title

SHENZHEN, SEP 05: Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty produced a tactically astute performance to overcome Malaysia's Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub and Tan Wee Kiong and seal their place in the China Masters final for the third time here on Saturday.

They are now just one step away from a second title of the season.

World No. 5 Satwik and Chirag, who finished runner-up at the 2023 and 2025 editions, recovered from a second-game lapse to prevail 21-15 18-21 21-11 over the world No. 29 Malaysians in 65 minutes.

"It has been not easy 3 months for both of us. Yeah, it feels really good. Obviously, we were out for quite some time, so playing finals back in our second tournament after the break feels really good. So yeah, feels special," Chirag said.

The Asian Games champions will face China's He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu in the summit clash.

"We now go back, recover first. Then see, wake up, how our body feels. Then we need one more match. We will push our 100% tomorrow, then we'll take it from that time," Satwik said.

The Indians came into the match with a 2-0 head-to-head lead against Nur and Tan, having defeated the Malaysians at the 2024 Thailand Open and 2025 Malaysian Open.

Tan, 37, is a veteran doubles player who won the silver medal at the Rio Olympics with Goh V Shem.



Playing their fourth consecutive semifinal, Satwik and Chirag, seeded fourth, fell 0-5 behind but responded with seven straight points, including a gruelling 34-shot rally, to move ahead 7-5.

Three errors from Nur then helped them extend the lead to 10-6. Chirag and Satwik committed a few errors of their own but held an 11-9 advantage at the interval.

On resumption, Satwik's angled smashes kept troubling the Malaysians as the Indians moved to 15-12 and then 17-12 after another error from Tan. At 18-15, the pairs engaged in an extraordinary 54-shot rally, with the Malaysian player even managing to keep the exchange alive while on the floor before eventually sending the shuttle long.

Nur then miscued another shot to hand the Indians five game points. Satwik and Chirag converted on their second opportunity to take the opening game.

After the change of sides, the Malaysians again made a quick start, racing to a 4-0 lead, but Satwik and Chi-

rag recovered swiftly, using a fine flick serve to draw level at 5-5.

The two pairs then engaged in a series of cross-court returns, mixed with powerful smashes and quick interceptions. Tan struggled to exert himself in the game, while Nur remained erratic.

The Indians edged ahead 10-8, but two front-court errors from Satwik brought the Malaysians back on level terms. Another Satwik error at the net allowed Malaysia to take an 11-10 lead into the interval.

A body smash aimed at Nur kept the Indians level at 13-13 after the changeover, but Tan then combined a drop with a smash to put Malaysia ahead 14-13.

The two pairs continued to fight tooth and nail, trading points all the way to 18-18 before the Malaysians edged ahead and forced a decider.

The Indians put the slip-up at the back end of the second game behind them and opened up a 5-2 lead. Chirag was particularly sharp in finding gaps and leaving the Malaysians cramped for space.

A fine moment of sportsmanship followed when Chirag apologised and high-fived Tan after a shot came off the frame of his racket to give the Indians a 7-3 lead.

Satwik and Chirag continued to dominate the rallies and entered the interval with an 11-4 advantage.

Satwik then unleashed another brutal smash at Nur to make it 13-6 as the Malaysians began to run out of steam and belief. It was one-way traffic thereafter, with the Indians firmly in control. Chirag's shot landing on the backline earned them 11 match points.

Tan saved two, but Chirag converted on the third opportunity, dispatching a flick serve to seal the win.

Satwik and Chirag have played three game matches, often dropping the second game.

"This is the whole story of this week. We have been playing first game easily, then second game we are giving away in the 15-all and 16-all all...but it's fine for us. It's a good tournament for us," Satwik said.

"We are coming back from the injury. We wanted that crucial matches before playing Asian games. We want to get that feel, get that confidence. Even when we are 16 or 18 all, we want to...like yesterday, we were down, then we came back and we won.

"That kind of practice, we were missing in the practice back home. I think it was a good tournament for us. I think one more final here. Shenzhen has been really special.