

Iyer, Rahul tons keep India perfect

Kohli, Rohit take World Cup wickets as India crush Netherlands to continue perfect nine wins in nine matches

● India defeated the Netherlands by 160 runs

AFP | Bengaluru

Centuries from Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul powered India to a 160-run World Cup win over the Netherlands yesterday as they completed the group stage with a perfect nine wins in nine games.

Iyer (128 not out) and Rahul (102) put on 208 runs to guide India to 410-4.

India then employed nine bowlers, including part-timers Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, to dismiss the Dutch for 250 in the tournament's concluding league match in Bengaluru.

The hosts will face New Zealand in the first semi-final in Mumbai on Wednesday followed by the second last-four clash between Australia and South Africa the next day in Kolkata.

"We focused on one game. We are playing in (nine) different venues and play accordingly and that's what we did," Rohit said of the perfect league stage.

"Very pleased at how we've played in these nine games. Very clinical from game one to today."

He added: "We are playing in India, there will be expectation. We wanted to do the job at hand.



India's Virat Kohli reacts during the match

It's one thing to talk about it but for everyone to buy into it is very important."

Iyer smashed his first World Cup ton in a match where all the top-five Indian batsmen went past the fifty mark on a batting-friendly pitch.

He reached his hundred -- his fourth in ODI cricket -- off 84 balls. He ended with 10 fours and five sixes.

Bengaluru-born Rahul raced to his ton with two sixes for the fastest Indian hundred in World Cups off 62 balls.

He departed four balls later as India fell short of their highest ever World Cup total of 413-5 v Bermuda in 2007.

Kohli reached his half century but fell for 51, silencing the crowd who had been anticipating the star batsman's 50th ODI ton after he equalled Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 in the team's previous win over South Africa.

Skipper Rohit, who hit 61, and Shubman Gill laid the foundations for the total in an opening stand of 100 with the pair hitting regular boundaries.

Gill fell for 51 off Paul van Meekeren and fellow quick Bas de Leede dismissed Rohit after the cap-

Scorecard

India 410 for 4 (Shreyas 128*, Rahul 102, Rohit 61, Kohli 51, Gill 51) beat Netherlands 250 (Nidamanuru 54, Engelbrecht 45, Siraj 2-29, Bumrah 2-33, Kuldeep 2-41, Jadeja 2-49) by 160 runs

tain reached his fourth 50-plus score including a ton in the tournament.

Part-time success

Bas overtook his father Tim de Leede, who took 14 wicket for the Dutch in the World Cup, and claimed one more to finish as the highest World Cup wicket-taker for his nation with 16 scalps.

The in-form Kohli reached the 71st ODI fifty of his career only to be bowled four balls later by Roelof van der Merwe's left-arm spin.



Shreyas Iyer in action



Virat Kohli claimed his first ODI wicket in nine years, dismissing Netherlands captain Scott Edwards for 11

surpassed South Africa's Quinton de Kock (591) as the leading batsman of the 2023 tournament with 594 runs.

Iyer kept up his blazing form to register his fourth successive score of 50 and above in the tournament and received support from the other end with Rahul joining the charge.

In reply, the Dutch were never in the chase and kept losing regular wickets including Kohli striking with the his gentle medium-pace to claim a first ODI wicket in nine years.

With the Dutch crawling in their reply, Rohit threw the ball

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ROHIT SHARMA

to Kohli who sent back opposition captain Scott Edwards, caught behind in his second over off a ball drifting down the leg side.

It was only Kohli's fifth career ODI wicket from his gentle medium-pace and first since 2014.

Sybrand Engelbrecht made 45 and Teja Nidamanuru hit 54 before the innings folded in 47.5 overs with Rohit ending using his part-time off spin to send back Nidamanuru.

Rohit last picked an ODI wicket in 2012 and this was only his ninth career wicket.

"We are pretty confident with the style we play but the tournament was always going to be tough," Edwards said of the Dutch who stunned South Africa early in the tournament but ended bottom of the 10-team table.

Najma eighth in IHF Super Globe



Al Najma's Hasan Madan attacks the Kuwait SC goal

● Hasan Madan scores five goals to pace Bahrainis in loss

● Najma could not match seventh-place finish from 2018

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Najma Club claimed eighth overall on the final classification of this year's prestigious IHF Men's Super Globe, held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

The Bahrainis bowed to Kuwait Sporting Club 24-29 in their tournament-concluding ranking match, played at Dammam Sports Hall.

Najma trailed 12-15 at the half and could not recover in

the final 30 minutes.

Hasan Madan finished as Najma's top scorer with five goals, while Mahdi Saad and Ali Ali added three apiece. Adel Mohammed, Mohammed Habib Ahmed, Abdulla Al Zaimour, Hassan Ali and Saud Aljunaid contributed two goals each.

Frankis Marzo had nine goals to pace Kuwait, while Abdulaziz Alshammar finished with six.

Najma participated in the IHF Super Globe for the second time, following the 2018 edition when they finished seventh. They could not match that classification yesterday.

The global competition, organised by the International Handball Federation (IHF), was held for the 16th time. Najma were the only Bahraini participants.

Sitra book place in play-off

● Sitra beat Isa Town to book place in play-off for quarter-final spot in Khalifa bin Salman Cup

TDT | Manama

Sitra booked their place in the play-off game for a quarter-final spot in this year's Khalifa bin Salman Cup basketball tournament.

Sitra claimed the spot after defeating Isa Town 88-68 in their preliminary round contest at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Sitra now take on Nuwaidrat for a spot in the last eight. Both teams are looking to join the

seven already-qualified sides, including Khalifa bin Salman Cup holders Manama, Muharraq, Al Ahli, Al Ettihad, Al Najma, Bahrain Club and Al Hala.

Sitra led 21-16 at the end of the first quarter and stayed 34-32 ahead at the half. In the third, they began to pull away and headed into the final period with a 58-51 advantage. They then closed the game out strong, outscoring Isa Town 30-17 in the fourth and enjoying a biggest lead of 22 points.

Ali Eid paced Sitra with 26 points while Abbas Fadhel Jasim had 15 and Ebrahim Murad Ebrahim scored 13. Hussain Mahdi was Isa Town's top scorer with 19 points, while Abdulla Ali came off the bench to contribute 18.



Isa Town's Jihad Ahmed looks to drive past Sitra's Ebrahim Murad Ebrahim during their game

Lewandowski rescues Barca and ends drought with Alaves double

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski ended his barren goalscoring spell with a brace to rescue the Spanish champions a 2-1 win over visiting Alaves in La Liga yesterday.

Samu Omorodion sent the visitors ahead in the first minute against a dire Barcelona but Lewandowski's second half double rescued the hosts three points.

The victory keeps Barcelona in touching distance of shock leaders Girona, who are four points ahead, and second place Real Madrid, who have a two-point advantage, after both won Saturday.

Veteran forward Lewandowski scored a brilliant header early in the second half and thrashed home a penalty in the 77th minute to reach seven



Robert Lewandowski shoots the ball

league goals.

Catalonia is in drought and Lewandowski was enduring one too, with the striker on his worst stretch of form for over a

decade, having failed to score in six appearances prior.

Barcelona are also on their own miserable run of performances.

"When you start off by going behind, as has happened to us various times this season, you have to row against the current," Barca midfielder Pedri Gonzalez told Movistar.

"We came into it after some complicated results, above all in the Champions League, but we have to continue like this, taking all three points."

Xavi said the team were not in crisis despite the recent Clasico defeat and a stumble against Shakhtar Donetsk in mid-week, and that it was up to him to bring the team out of their slump.

The coach handed Pedri his first start after injury, deployed Joao Cancelo at left-back for the first time and brought 16-year-old starlet Lamine Yamal back into the side.