



# Williamson leads New Zealand to victory, suffers new injury worry

Captain Kane Williamson returns with a stellar 78, but exits due to an injury as New Zealand secures a dominant win

● New Zealand comfortably chases down 246 for victory

AFP | Chennai

**K**ane Williamson marked his return to the World Cup with an undefeated 78 as New Zealand cruised past Bangladesh by eight wickets yesterday but the captain was forced to retire hurt with a hand injury.

Williamson had been sidelined with a serious knee injury picked up during the IPL and sat out New Zealand's first two wins at the World Cup.

Chasing 246 to win, the 33-year-old, playing his first ODI since January, had reached his 43rd fifty in the format off 81 balls and was looking well set for a century.

He moved on to 78 with eight fours and a six when he had to call it quits after a throw from the deep rapped him painfully on the glove, jamming his hand against the bat handle.

In discussion with the medical team, and with the Black Caps only 46 runs short of victory, it was decided to take Williamson out of the game.

New Zealand comfortably wrapped up their third win with 43 balls to spare. Williamson had put on a sec-



New Zealand's Kane Williamson plays a shot

ond-wicket stand of 80 with opener Devon Conway (45) and then 108 with Daryl Mitchell who raced to his 50 off 43 balls.

Mitchell did it in some style with a giant heave for six off Bangladesh seamer Shoriful Islam.

Mitchell finished undefeated on 89 off just 67 deliveries, with six fours and four sixes under his belt.

New Zealand, runners-up at the 2015 and 2019 World Cups, had already defeated defending champions England as well as outsiders Netherlands in India. Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan and then lost to England.

Earlier, Mushfiqur Rahim hit a fine half century to lead Bangladesh to 245-9 while veteran Black Caps fast bowler Trent Boult claimed a 200th one-day

## Scorecard

**New Zealand** for 2 (Conway 89\*, Williamson 78, Mustafizur 1-36) beat **Bangladesh** 245 for 9 (Mushfiqur 66, Shakib 41\*, Ferguson 3-49) by eight wickets

international wicket.

Mushfiqur made 66 off 75 balls with six fours and two sixes, taking his number of fifties in the format to 48 having also hit a half-century against England three days ago.

The 36-year-old, playing in his 259th ODI, shared a crucial 96-run fourth wicket partnership with skipper Shakib Al Hasan (40) to help their team recover from 56-4.

## Boult's 200th wicket

Mushfiqur was eventually clean-bowled by Matt Henry as he attempted to pick up the scoring rate after Shakib had perished, caught by wicketkeeper Tom Latham off Lockie Ferguson after top-edging an attempted pull shot.

Shakib ended his innings suffering from cramps in the sweltering heat and batting without a helmet or cap against the spinners.

Mushfiqur's brother-in-law Mahmudullah, batting at number eight, added a valuable undefeated 41.



**Trent Boult, who dismissed opener Liton Das off the first ball of the match, became the sixth New Zealand player to take 200 ODI wickets**

Boult, meanwhile, became the sixth New Zealand player to take 200 ODI wickets.

The 34-year-old reached the personal landmark when he dismissed Towhid Hridoy, caught at extra cover by Mitchell Santner for 13, in the 38th over.

Playing in his 107th ODI, Boult also dismissed opener Liton Das off the first ball of the match.

Liton was celebrating his 29th birthday but any hopes of a big score to mark the occasion were shattered when he shuffled down the wicket to confront Boult only to sky the ball to a grateful Henry who pocketed the chance at fine leg.

## Rohit says India in nice 'rhythm' ahead of Pakistan clash

AFP | Ahmedabad

**I**ndia skipper Rohit Sharma yesterday said the team remains confident going into a "massive" World Cup clash with arch-rivals Pakistan at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

The two powerhouses renew their rivalry on Saturday at the 132,000-seater Narendra Modi Stadium, named after the Indian Prime Minister.

Favourites India have won their two opening matches of the 50-over showpiece event to get past five-time winners Australia and then Afghanistan.

Rohit said the team has momentum after they won the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and then beat Australia in a three-match se-



India's Hardik Pandya (L) celebrates with teammate Virat Kohli as their team captain Rohit Sharma watches

ries.

"Rhythm is very important. If you look at it in other terms, it is called momentum," Rohit told reporters on the eve of the

hotly-anticipated match.

"We have played seven or eight matches in India and before that in Sri Lanka and here too we played two matches of

**"Rhythm is very important. If you look at it in other terms, it is called momentum. We have played seven or eight matches in India and before that in Sri Lanka and here too we played two matches of the World Cup."**

ROHIT SHARMA

the World Cup."

He added: "The bowlers have shown very good performances. Whether it is spinners or seamers, whenever they have got a chance to put pressure on the batsmen, they have done so. All the batsmen have scored runs."

## India's Gill '99 percent' ready for Pakistan clash

AFP | Ahmedabad

**I**ndia's Shubman Gill is "99 percent available to play" against Pakistan in the World Cup blockbuster showdown after the opener recovered from dengue fever, captain Rohit Sharma said yesterday.

Gill missed the team's opening two victories but is likely to take the field at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

Rohit did not reveal the team for the hotly-anticipated contest and when pressed about Gill's participation, the captain said, "we will see tomorrow".

Gill, 24, had a practice session on Thursday after he flew into the western Indian city from Chennai where he had been hospitalised and missed India's win over Australia.



Shubman Gill

The batsman picked up the dengue infection ahead of the tournament and did not travel with the team for the second match in New Delhi where India beat Afghanistan.

Ishan Kishan replaced Gill and filled the opening slot in both the matches, making enough and 47.

India played three spinners in their opening match before bringing in fast bowler Shardul Thakur for Ravichandran Ashwin against Afghanistan.

## 'Records meant to be broken': Azam shrugs off India stranglehold

AFP | Ahmedabad

**D**efiant Pakistan captain Babar Azam declared yesterday that "records are meant to be broken" as his team looks to break free of India's World Cup stranglehold when the bitter rivals clash on Saturday.

India boast a 7-0 record over their neighbours in World Cups despite Pakistan having a healthy 73-56 overall advantage since their first one-day international clash back in 1978.

"I don't focus on the past," said Azam yesterday. "Let's focus on the thing to come as we know records are meant to be broken."

"We will try to play well and it all depends on how you play on the day, just like we did in



Pakistan's players attend a practice session

the first two matches," added the skipper whose side have two wins from two at the World Cup after seeing off the Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Azam said he has told his

players that Saturday's clash inside the 132,000-capacity Ahmedabad stadium is a "golden opportunity" to write their names into World Cup folklore.

"The India-Pakistan match is

**Under Azam, Pakistan broke a Twenty20 World Cup sequence of five defeats (from 2007 to 2016) against India with a 10-wicket rout at Dubai in 2021**

a big game, high intensity. Every such game is challenging," added Azam, a survivor of the 2019 World Cup clash in Manchester which India won by 89 runs.

"I have told (the players) it's the best opportunity to perform. It is a big stadium that can accommodate many fans, it's a golden opportunity for us to perform in front of these fans."

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