

Afghanistan stun Pakistan

Afghanistan send Pakistan crashing to shock World Cup defeat, win by eight wickets

● Superb batting and clinical bowling lead Afghanistan to a historic win over Pakistan

AFP | Chennai

Afghanistan put on a superb batting and bowling display to hand Pakistan a stunning eight-wicket defeat in the Cricket World Cup on Monday.

Chasing a 283-run target, Afghanistan were lifted by Ibrahim Zadran (87), Rahmat Shah (77 not out) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (65) as they scored 286-2 in 49 overs.

Pakistan had made 282-7 in their 50 overs with 74 from skipper Babar Azam and 58 from opener Abdullah Shafique but the total did not prove tough enough for a clinical Afghanistan.

Skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi, with a 45-ball 48 not out, hit the winning boundary as Afghanistan improved upon their highest ODI chase of 274 against the UAE in Dubai in 2014.

The win is Afghanistan's first-ever over Pakistan in eight ODIs and came eight days after their shock victory over defending champions England in Delhi.

"This win tastes nice," said Shahidi. "The way we chased was very professional and the way we did that will help us go into our other games now."

"We are playing quality cricket. We have always had belief and at the start of the tournament I told my team I wanted to make it a historic one for our country and our people. We did that against England and now today against Pakistan."

The defeat leaves Pakistan's World



Afghanistan's players celebrate after the dismissal of Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique

Cup campaign in disarray with three defeats in five games and a formidable South Africa to face at the same venue on Friday.

In contrast, Afghanistan's campaign is slightly revived with two wins in five matches and struggling Sri Lanka as their next opponents in Pune on Sunday.

"That really hurt us. We got a good total. Our bowling is not up to the mark," said Pakistan skipper Azam.

The win was greeted with celebratory gunfire, cheers and fireworks across the Afghan capital Kabul for at least 15 minutes after the match concluded.

Pakistan were sloppy in the field as they conceded easy boundaries with openers Zadran and Gurbaz taking their side to 100 in the 16th over.

The pair put on 130 by the 22nd over

ies before handing a catch behind off Hasan Ali with 93 still needed.

Rahmat and Shahidi ensured Afghanistan did not collapse.

Rahmat hit five fours and two sixes in his 84-ball stay at the crease.

Earlier, Azam hit a stylish half-century to guide his team to a fighting total after he won the toss and batted first.

Azam's 92-ball knock was complemented by Shafique's 75-ball 58 while Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed scored a valuable 40 runs apiece.

On a spin-friendly Chidambaram Stadium pitch, Afghanistan fielded four slow bowlers with 18-year-old left-armer Noor Ahmad grabbing a career best 3-49 on his World Cup debut.

Noor shines on debut

Shadab added a rapid 73 runs with Iftikhar for the sixth wicket as Pakistan took 61 off the last five overs, with Shadab falling off the last delivery.

Iftikhar cracked four sixes and two fours while Shadab's innings featured a six and a four.

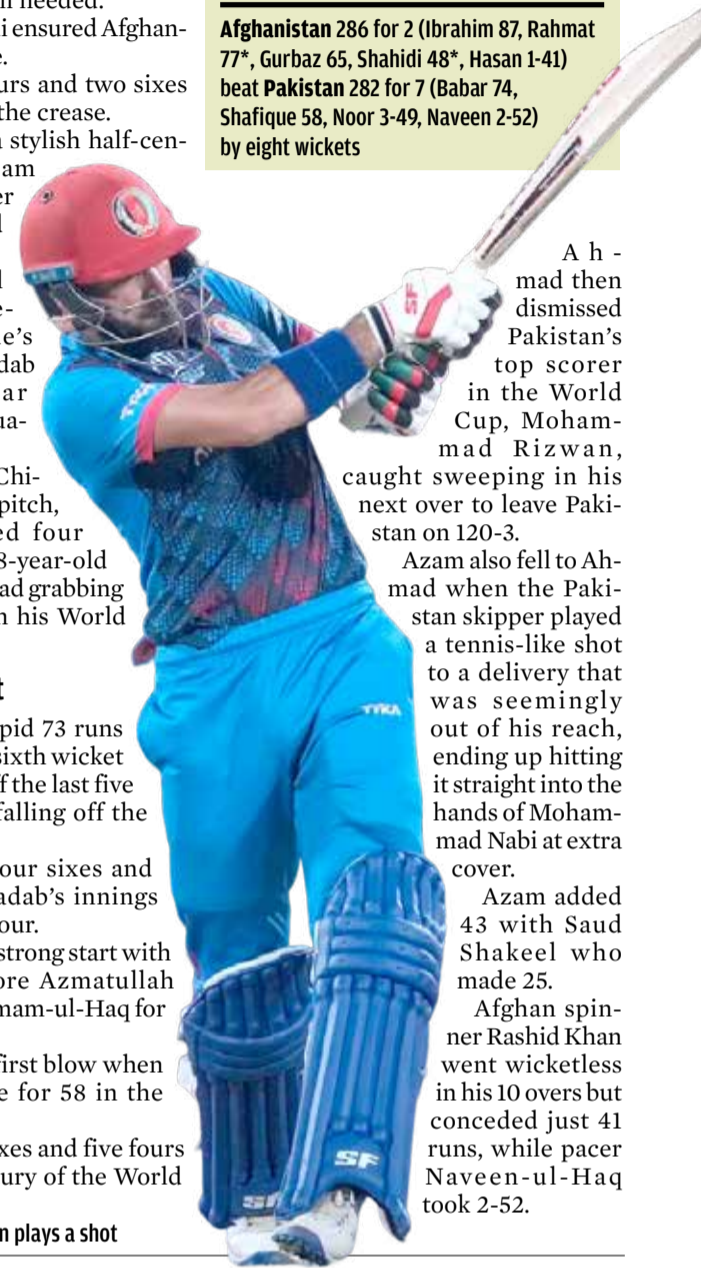
Pakistan enjoyed a strong start with a 56-run stand before Azmatullah Omarzai dismissed Imam-ul-Haq for 17 in the 11th over.

Ahmad struck his first blow when he trapped Shafique for 58 in the 23rd over.

Shafique hit two sixes and five fours in his third half-century of the World Cup.

Scorecard

Afghanistan 286 for 2 (Ibrahim 87, Rahmat 77*, Gurbaz 65, Shahidi 48*, Hasan 1-41) **beat Pakistan 282 for 7** (Babar 74, Shafique 58, Noor 3-49, Naveen 2-52) **by eight wickets**



Ibrahim Zadran plays a shot

“We are playing quality cricket. We have always had belief and at the start of the tournament I told my team I wanted to make it a historic one for our country and our people. We did that against England and now today against Pakistan”

AFGHANISTAN SKIPPER HASHMATULLAH SHAHIDI

and it was only a miscued shot from Gurbaz off Shaheen Shah Afridi that brought Pakistan their first wicket.

Gurbaz hit nine boundaries and a six in his 53-ball knock while Zadran scored 10 boundaries off 113 deliver-

Ahmad then dismissed Pakistan's top scorer in the World Cup, Mohammad Rizwan, caught sweeping in his next over to leave Pakistan on 120-3.

Azam also fell to Ahmad when the Pakistan skipper played a tennis-like shot to a delivery that was seemingly out of his reach, ending up hitting it straight into the hands of Mohammad Nabi at extra cover.

Azam added 43 with Saud Shakeel who made 25.

Afghan spinner Rashid Khan went wicketless in his 10 overs but conceded just 41 runs, while pacer Naveen-ul-Haq took 2-52.

Zain basketball league set for tip-off

● Muharraq take on Sitra tonight to get new campaign underway in 2023/2024 Zain Bahrain Basketball League

TDI | Manama

The 2023/2024 Zain Bahrain Basketball League tips off this evening for another exciting campaign in the Kingdom's leading basketball championship.

Eleven clubs are once again taking part this season, with defending back-to-back champions Manama aiming for an historic "three-peat". But their rivals will be looking to mount a stern challenge, led by perennial contenders Muharraq and Al Ahli.

Also hoping to make their presence felt on the hardwood are Al Hala, Al Ettihad, Al Najma, Sitra, Bahrain Club, Nuwairat, Isa Town and Samaheej. Joining the fray this season are Bahrain's men's B national team, but their results are not to be counted on the league standings.

The first evening of action tonight will feature one contest between Muharraq and Sitra, scheduled for a 7.30pm start.



Manama court general Hussain Shaker in action during practice ahead of the start of the new season

Tomorrow, Hala and Ettihad face off at 5.30pm, followed by Bahrain Club and Najma squaring off at 7.30pm. On Thursday, Ahli face off with Nuwaidrat at 5.30pm, and then Manama take on Samaheej at 7.30pm.

Action in the 2023/2024 Zain Bahrain Basketball League is scheduled to continue until May of next year.

Manama captured the 2022/2023 league title to cap a remarkable season that saw

them win three major trophies, with the two others being the Khalifa bin Salman Cup and the first-ever FIBA West Asia Super League.

Last week, Manama kick started the 2023/2024 campaign by winning the Late Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa Cup, also known as the Bahrain Super Cup, after defeating Muharraq in the traditional annual season-opening game.

Al Khaldiya beat Busaiteen in football league

● Muharraq equalise late in 1-1 stalemate against bitter rivals Al Ahli in week four action

TDI | Manama

Defending champions Al Khaldiya came away with a fine victory over Busaiteen last night while Muharraq salvaged a late draw against bitter rivals Al Ahli in week four of the 2023/2024 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Khaldiya scored twice in the second half before conceding one in the game's closing moments in their 2-1 triumph over Busaiteen. Muharraq, on the other hand, levelled the contest in stoppage time after Ahli appeared to be heading towards a narrow win.

The two matches were played at separate venues.

In Khaldiya's triumph, Ismael Abdullatif and Dhurgham Ismail were both on target for the winners. Abdullatif opened their account in the 73rd minute with a brilliant bicycle kick from inside the penalty area, and then Ismail doubled their advantage just five minutes later with a free-kick from a metre



Manama court general Hussain Shaker in action during practice ahead of the start of the new season

outside the box. Ismail's shot flew over the Busaiteen wall and into the goal.

Busaiteen got their lone consolation in the third minute of second-half stoppage time through Saleh Al Zubaidi.

Khaldiya improved to 10 points with the result following their third win in four matches. Busaiteen suffered their third loss and stayed on one point.

Meanwhile, in the Muharraq-Ahli stalemate, Ahli went ahead in the 58th minute with a brilliant volley from Geovane Silva Santos from the edge of

the penalty box. He set his shot up with his first touch and then fired in a stunning rocket to the top-left corner of the net.

But Muharraq equalised in the third minute of second-half stoppage time when Firas Shawat headed home off a corner kick, squeezing the ball into goal past Ahli's Bahrain international goalkeeper Ebrahim Luthfallah.

The share of the points helped Muharraq improve to five on the standings with their second draw. Ahli went to four points.