

# In-form India staying focused despite off-field turmoil

Dhoni's men are looking to top their group with a win against underperforming Australians, who are staring at early exit

AGENCIES

MIRPUR: India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni insists his side have had no problem focusing on the World Twenty20 despite the controversy surrounding cricket in the country.

A Supreme Court investigation into allegations of corruption at the Indian Premier League has been ongoing during the tournament, with BCCI president N

Srinivasan forced to temporarily step down from his role as a result. There was also a proposal that Dhoni's franchise Chennai Super Kings, as well as Rajasthan Royals, would be suspended from this year's IPL, though that is now off the table.

Against this turbulent background, India have progressed serenely on the field, cruising to three successive wins and becoming the first side to seal a semi-final slot. They finish their Group 2 campaign against an underperforming Australia side on Sunday, with Dhoni happy his team can continue keeping their eye on the prize.

"A lot of things happen around cricket but you have to be focused when you are

MATCHBOX

MS Dhoni has won 15 of his last 16 international tosses. The one match where he lost the toss was washed out.

Every time Australia have scored 175 or more in T20s in Asia, they have lost.

If he plays this match, David Warner will become the first Australian with 50 T20I caps.

Source: ESPNcricinfo

India's ability to play and bowl spin has been a key factor to their success on a turning track in Mirpur, a good sign for the 2007 champions with the semi-finals and finals taking place at the same venue

# McCullum powers Kiwis to easy win

AGENCIES

CHITTAGONG: Captain Brendon McCullum's 65 powered New Zealand to a six-wicket win against the Netherlands and kept their hopes alive for a semi-final spot from Group One in the World Twenty20.

The Kiwis reached their 152-run target with an over to spare to bring up their second victory in three matches in the super 10 stage. McCullum, the most prolific run-scorer in the shortest format of the game, hit four boundaries and three sixes during his 45-ball knock, also bringing up his 13<sup>th</sup> half century in T20 internationals. The 32-year-old, who became the first batsman to cross 2,000 international runs in the format, stitched together meaty stands with Kane Williamson (29), Ross Taylor (18) and Corey Anderson (20 not out) to make it a comfortable chase for his side.

Earlier, captain Peter Borren compiled his highest T20 score of 49 to anchor the Dutch innings and take them to 151 for four wickets after being put in to bat. The 30-year-old hit seven fours and a six during his 35-ball knock and added 60 for the fourth wicket with Tom Cooper (40 not out) to give the Netherlands some momentum after a slow start. Cooper hit four boundaries and two sixes during his 23-ball unbeaten stay at the wicket but New Zealand pulled things back with some miserly bowling in the death overs.

**BRIEF SCORES:** New Zealand 152 for 4 (McCullum 65, van der Gugen 3-30) beat Netherlands 151 for 4 (Borren 49, Cooper 40\*) by six wickets



## England bow out of contention after three-run loss

AFP

CHITTAGONG: South Africa produced a clinical performance to beat England by three runs in Chittagong to advance to the World Twenty20 semi-finals on Saturday.

AB de Villiers and Hashim Amla hit half-centuries to anchor South Africa's highest total of the tournament of 196-5 before Wayne Parnell took 3-31 to keep England down to 193-7 at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium. South Africa are the second team to qualify for the semis after 2007 champions India cruised to the last four from Group Two.

The defeat, their second in three Group One Super-10 matches, sent 2010 champions England out of the semi-final race. Sri Lanka meet New Zealand in their last Group One match on Monday and the winners will join South Africa in the last four. Pakistan meet Bangladesh in a Group Two match in Dhaka on Sunday and if the 2009 champions beat the hosts, their last match against title-holders the West Indies will decide the last semi-final berth.

De Villiers was happy at the much-needed win. "It was a great game the boys did extremely well," said De Villiers, declared man-of-the-match. "It's very tough conditions to field in. I knew from the start we had to be

unpredictable and mix things up. But once again the execution of the bowlers was amazing."

Stuart Broad said his players were heartbroken. "It's a fantastic game, credit to the players for that, we're heartbroken to come out on the wrong end but AB took the game away from us. "It didn't go to plan in the last three overs but apart from that it was a good game for us."

England, who chased down a 190-run target against Sri Lanka on Thursday, failed to match that performance with Alex Hales (38), Jos Buttler (34) and Ravi Bopara (31) unable to benefit from good starts. Parnell, who was released from the squad for two days to



Stand-in captain AB de Villiers smashed 69 from 28 balls to help South Africa post 196-5.

attend a court hearing relating to drugs charges in the 2012 Indian Premier League in Mumbai on Friday, dismissed Michael Lumb (18), Hales and Moeen Ali (10) to jolt England after they got off to a 46-run start by the fifth over. Hales hit six fours and a six off 22 balls but once he departed the target continued to climb with 45 needed off the last three overs and 22 off Dale Steyn's final over.

South Africa's total was built around a swashbuckling 28-ball 69 not out by De Villiers and a 37-ball 56 by Amla. De Villiers was ruthless in the final overs, taking 26 off Jade Dernbach's 18<sup>th</sup> over and reached his 50 with a towering six. In all he hit nine fours and three sixes to help South Africa during an innings stopped twice for floodlight failure. South Africa smashed 75 in the last five overs.

Amla and Quinton de Kock (29) helped South Africa to 90 without loss in the 11<sup>th</sup> over with the former in a punishing mood. The bearded Amla hit six fours and two sixes before he was caught at deep mid-wicket off Stuart Broad.

South Africa made two changes from the line-up which beat the Netherlands in their last game, with Farhan Behardien and Parnell in for regular skipper Faf du Plessis — suspended for one match due to a slow over-rate — and Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

**BRIEF SCORES:** South Africa 196 for 5 (De Villiers 69, Amla 56) beat England (Hales 38, Parnell 3-31) by three runs

## Hamilton on pole in Malaysia

REUTERS

SEPANG: Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton made it two poles in two races after emerging unscathed from an incident-packed and rain-hit Malaysian Grand Prix qualifying on Saturday.

The Briton saw off Red Bull's quadruple Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel by 0.055 of a second in a session with two red flags, grid penalties, a 50 minute rain delay and more downpours throughout that left drivers struggling for visibility. The pole was the 33<sup>rd</sup> of Hamilton's career, equalling the British record held by the late Jim Clark since 1964, and was secured in a time of one minute 59.431 seconds.

"I'm really happy with how well we've done over the weekend, but today was incredible, how heavy was the rain?" Hamilton told reporters.

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# Madras Tiger roars back

Anand wins Candidates chess to set up world championship rematch with Magnus Carlsen

PTI

KHANTY MANSIYSK (RUSSIA): Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand proved all his critics wrong and won the Candidates Chess tournament after settling for a draw with Sergey Karjakin of Russia in the 13<sup>th</sup> and penultimate round on Saturday.

The tournament victory gives Anand the right to a match against Magnus Carlsen of Norway who dethroned the Indian champion at Chennai in November last year. The rematch will take place sometime in the last quarter of this year.

Anand held his own against Karjakin in the endgame that lasted more than five and a half hours. The draw helped Anand reach eight points and he benefited from the biggest upset in the tournament when top seed Levon Aronian of Armenia lost to lowest ranked Dmitry Andreikin of Russia.

On a day that saw Vladimir Kramnik avenging his earlier loss in the tournament against Veselin Topalov of Bulgaria, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan played out a draw with Russian Peter Svidler to seal the fate in Anand's favour irrespective of the results on Sunday. With Anand on eight points, Karjakin, Kramnik, Mamedyarov, Andreikin and Aronian are now 6.5 points each. Peter Svidler stand seventh on six points while Topalov remained on 5.5 to fill the last place.

In the last round, Anand meets Svidler

and the draw could be a likely result as the Indian will play with white pieces.

In the game against Karjakin, Anand equalised quite easily with the Queen's gambit declined and had no troubles whatsoever in finding a thematic pawn sacrifice that made his position easier to play. However, while trying to work out the right path, Anand erred slightly and faced a difficult but possible defense when he parted with two pieces for Karjakin's rook.

The ensuing endgame was easier for Karjakin and the defence was not easy, but Anand kept finding the right moves and obtained a passed pawn on the king side that proved vital. Karjakin was aware at this point that the fight was over but he played on till 91 moves before signing the peace treaty.

Andreikin came up with a sensational performance to beat Aronian who appeared out of sorts once more. The Russian went for the Trompovsky opening as an early surprise and got a comfortable endgame once the queen's got traded. Aronian was saddled with the worse pawn structure and another accuracy cost him heavily as he landed in a lost rook and pawns endgame.

Kramnik had a fine victory against Topalov out of a Semi Slav defense. Playing white, Kramnik was at the top of his game for once in the tournament. Topalov made the mistake of pushing his king side pawns and Kramnik picked one of them with precise calculation. The Bulgaria posed some problems before he faced inevitable loss.

## EPL: Chelsea lose at Palace, Man U win

LONDON: Chelsea suffered a shock 1-0 defeat at Crystal Palace on Saturday as John Terry's own goal opened the door to title rivals Manchester City and Liverpool, leading Jose Mourinho to rule his side out of the race.

"Now I feel it's impossible to win the title," Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho told Sky Sports. "We depend too much on other results. Two weekends ago we lost three points (to Aston Villa) and now it is too much about other results."

As Mourinho's men sank to their first defeat by Palace in 24 years, champions Manchester United ended a week of turmoil with a 4-1 win over Aston Villa, a double by England striker Wayne Rooney easing the pressure on manager David Moyes. Chelsea captain Terry headed a Joel Ward cross into his own goal early in the second half at Selhurst Park, amid suggestions that the ball touched Palace defender Joe Ledley's hand on the way in. Former European champions Chelsea stay top on 69 points, one ahead of Liverpool who host Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday. Manchester City, who were playing Arsenal later on Saturday, are three points off the pace with three matches in hand. Palace's victory moved them up to 16<sup>th</sup> place with 31 points, five clear of the relegation zone, and Selhurst Park was rocking at the end of the game with the fans belting out their 'Glad All Over' anthem.

**RESULTS:** Stoke City 1 (Peter Odemwingie 62) beat Hull City 0, Crystal Palace 1 (John Terry 52og) beat Chelsea 0, Swansea City 3 (Jonathan de Guzman 30, 38, Wayne Routledge 75) beat Norwich City 0, Southampton 4 (Jay Rodriguez 45+1, 89, Rickie Lambert 49, Adam Lallana 70) beat Newcastle United 0, West Bromwich Albion 3 (Morgan Amalfitano 2, Graham Dorrans 9, Thievy Bifouma 90+4) drew with Cardiff City 3 (Jordan Mutch 30, Steven Caulker 73, Mats Moller Daehli 90+5), Manchester United 4 (Wayne Rooney 20, 45pen, Juan Mata 57, Javier Hernandez 90+1) beat Aston Villa 1 (Ashley Westwood 13). REUTERS

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