



Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir (right) ripped through the Indian top order at The Oval in London yesterday, claiming three wickets, including that of skipper Virat Kohli. PHOTO: REUTERS

AMIR SPELL DESTROYS INDIA

Pakistan claim maiden Champions Trophy with convincing 180-run win over arch-rivals

LONDON • Mohammad Amir removed all of India's top three batsmen as Pakistan stunned their arch-rivals with a remarkable 180-run win in cricket's Champions Trophy final at The Oval in London yesterday.

Title-holders India, set 339 to win, collapsed to 33 for three and 54 for five against a Pakistan side they had thrashed by 124 runs in their tournament opener at Edgbaston on June 4.

They were eventually dismissed

for 158, with 19.3 overs to spare.

Hasan Ali, who kick-started Pakistan's revival in their group win over top-ranked South Africa, ended the match when he had Jasprit Bumrah caught by gleeful captain and wicket-keeper Sarfraz Ahmed.

Left-arm fast bowler Amir, whose career was almost ended on the other side of London's River Thames by a ban and jail term he received for his part in a spot-fixing scam during a 2010 Test against

England at Lord's, finished with three for 16.

He trapped Rohit Sharma leg before wicket for nought with a swinging delivery and removed India talisman Virat Kohli with another fine ball which the captain could only edge to point for five.

Kohli, the world's top-ranked one-day batsman, had been dropped off the previous delivery in the slips and the India fans looked shell-shocked as he trudged off.

Their hopes then rested largely on the shoulders of opener Shikhar Dhawan who had been in fine form in the tournament but he made only 21 before nicking the inspired

Amir to Sarfraz.

Earlier, Fakhar Zaman's maiden one-day international hundred was the cornerstone of Pakistan's 338-4.

Caught off a no-ball on three, left-handed opener Fakhar went on to make an impressive 114.

He shared a first-wicket stand of 128 with Azhar Ali (59) and then put on 72 with Babar Azam (46) for the second wicket.

Fakhar hit 12 fours and three sixes before skying a catch off Hardik Pandya but Pakistan had the perfect platform to make the highest total in a Champions Trophy final.

India paceman Bhuvneshwar Ku-

mar, with an economical 1-44 in 10 overs, helped atone for some wayward bowling by his team-mates in an innings featuring 13 wides and three no-balls – nearly three extra overs.

But Pakistan veteran Mohammad Hafeez's quickfire 57 not out, including three sixes, took Pakistan well beyond 300.

Together with fellow all-rounder Imad Wasim (25 not out), he shared an unbroken stand of 71 for the fifth wicket.

India's star off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had a return to forget, his 10 wicketless overs costing 70 runs.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

National polo team have gold in their sights

Nicholas De Silva

The Singapore national polo team will be aiming for gold when the sport returns to the SEA Games after a 10-year absence.

Captain Satinder Garcha said the team are confident of putting up a good showing at the Aug 19-30 affair in Kuala Lumpur.

Garcha, 44, who also captained the 2007 team, believes the team this year are stronger, noting: "The calibre of horses are better and we have a world-class coach which I think has really galvanised the team."

Backed by sponsorship from Prudential, the team have made drastic improvements in terms of preparations from their previous campaign, such as the appointment of Hector Julio Crotto as coach.

The Argentinian boasts a nine-goal handicap and brings a wealth of experience from his coaching stints with teams back home. Argentina is considered one of the world's leading polo nations.

Iqbal Jumabhoy, 59, a member of the pioneer SEA Games team in 1983, highlighted the international exposure of the current batch as a strength. Speaking after the four-team SEA Games Challenge



Iqbal Jumabhoy of the Singapore national team clearing his lines against Singapore Polo Club in the final of the SEA Games Challenge Trophy yesterday. PHOTO COURTESY OF SINGAPORE POLO CLUB

Trophy tournament where the national team finished second, he said: "When I played in 1983, I played here (Singapore Polo Club)."

"Contrast that with the experience of the rest of the team now, they have played all over the world so our game has improved."

Despite not winning the SEA Games Challenge Trophy after losing 3½-3 to the Singapore Polo Club 1 in the final, Crotto remains optimistic.

The 65-year-old said: "I don't mind about today (result). I am happy with the way the team have played the past few days. We must improve on teamwork and push to-

gether the same way. We are starting to go in the right direction."

The national team, who are made up of amateur players, will have their work cut out for them as they compete against professionals from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei at the SEA Games.

However, Garcha is unfazed by the challenge, citing 2007's silver-medal finish as evidence that the team can hold their own.

This will be only the third time polo has featured at the SEA Games since its debut in 1983.

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Clearwater drive to the top despite finishing fifth

Ho Cai Jun

A problematic race could not stop Singapore-registered Clearwater Racing team from continuing their good run of form in the World Endurance Championship (WEC) series yesterday.

The three-driver team, consisting of Singapore-born Malaysian Mok Weng Sun, Japanese Keita Sawa and Irishman Matt Griffin, finished fifth in the GTE-Amateur category at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

They faced a challenging race after being involved in an early-race collision at the Circuit de la Sarthe in France.

Mok, who leads the team, said: "We got hit by a car five hours into the race which caused a tyre blowout and some body damage. (We) lost two laps as a result, otherwise we'd be right in it, fighting for the outright win (in the category)."

Then, with less than 75 minutes to go, a gearbox compressor leak limited the No. 61 Ferrari's pace, forcing Griffin and Sawa to slow down and nurse the car home.

The result comes after a victory in Silverstone in April and a second-place finish at Spa-Francorchamps last month that left them five points behind Britain's Aston Martin Racing in the WEC

GTE-Amateur standings.

With the four cars that finished ahead of them not involved in the series, Clearwater leaptfrogged to the top of the table with 90 points, 15 ahead of Aston Martin Racing.

In the top-tier LMP1 category, the Porsche LMP Team of Timo Bernhard, Earl Bamber and Brendon Hartley finished nine laps ahead of Toyota Gazoo Racing. They were the only two teams that finished in the six-car field.

This is the second year that Clearwater are competing at the prestigious Le Mans race. They were the first Singapore-registered outfit to participate in the annual endurance race last year, when they finished fourth.

Despite posting a worse result this year, Mok remained upbeat.

"It was a relatively good race. The car held together after the contact to finish the race," he said.

"That's rare for a 24-hour race where cars can break down and have mechanical damage. It's a good start to the championship, to finish the race and capture the maximum amount of championship points, but the competition is tough."

They head to Germany next month for the fourth leg of the nine-race series and will finish the season on Nov 18 in Bahrain.

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SportsWorld

4 bronzes, 1 silver for S'pore at diving meet

MACAU • National divers Jonathan Chan and Freida Lim earned a silver in the mixed synchronised platform yesterday at the Asian Diving Cup, as Singapore ended the meet with four bronzes and one silver.

Their score of 269.10 put them behind China's Xia Yujie and Cao Lizhi (318.08) and ahead of Malaysians Muhammad Syahmi and Kimberly Bong (249.72).

Team-mates Mark Lee and Timothy Lee took bronze in the men's 3m synchronised springboard, posting a score of 358.56 to finish behind China's Chen Linhai and Liu Chengming (418.17) and Malaysia's Ooi Tze Liang and Chew Yiwei (391.95). In the mixed 3m synchronised springboard event, Ashlee Tan and Joshua Chong scored 253.95 for third place, finishing behind China's Lin Qu and Ling Yang (319.50) and Malaysia's Nur Dhabitah Sabri and Gabriel Gilbert Daim (312.00).

Injured Kerber in doubt for Wimbledon

LONDON • Angelique Kerber suffered a fresh blow yesterday when a hamstring strain forced the world No. 1 to withdraw from tennis' Aegon Classic in Birmingham.

The German, who has been clinging onto the top spot despite failing to win a Tour-level title this year, is hoping to capture a third Grand Slam crown at Wimbledon next month. Her injury will now put her chances of competing at the All England club in doubt.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Srikanth clinches Indonesia Open title

JAKARTA • Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth clinched his third Super Series title, lifting the Indonesia Open men's singles trophy with victory over Japanese qualifier Kazumasa Sakai yesterday, reported the Press Trust of India.

The world No. 22, who had reached the final of the Singapore Open in April, outclassed Sakai, ranked 47th, 21-11, 21-19 in just 37 minutes to take home a cheque of US\$75,000 (S\$103,700).

Maldini switches from field to court

ROME • After a glorious quarter of a century starring for AC Milan on the football pitch, Paolo Maldini has qualified for a tennis tournament in Milan.

The 49-year-old, now working as a director at Miami FC, qualified by wild card in the doubles in the weekend-long Aspria Tennis Cup, part of the challenger circuit, the level below the ATP World Tour. AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE

Fung claims maiden Asian title by a shot

BANGKOK • Malaysia's Nicholas Fung clinched his first Asian Tour title at the Queen's Cup in Thailand yesterday with a solid putt on the 18th hole for a four-under 67 that sealed his one-shot victory over Thailand's Jazz Janewattananond (66).

The 27-year-old golfer totalled 15-under 269 for the US\$500,000 (S\$691,600) tournament in Koh Samui, where conditions were often blustery.

Singapore's Mardan Mamat carded a two-over 73 in his final round to total 291 to finish tied-55th.

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