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Bagnaia wins Indonesia MotoGP to regain title lead



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Aussies 'need to start winning quick' to rescue World Cup bid

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Afghanistan defeat champions England by 69 runs in World Cup shock

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Qatar's al-Attiyah retains W2RC title



Toyota Gazoo Racing's Qatari driver Nasser al-Attiyah and his French navigator Mathieu Baumel yesterday retained their FIA World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) title after gaining an unassailable lead over their closest rival Yazeed al-Rajhi (Overdrive Racing) of Saudi Arabia at the Rally Du Maroc. Al-Attiyah won Stage 2 of the Morocco Rally with a substantial 2 minute and 11-second advantage over second-placed Carlos Sainz of Audi Sport, in Zagora, yesterday, while al-Rajhi finished fourth. The win lifted al-Attiyah's overall World Championship points tally to 199 points, while al-Rajhi stayed at 144 points. Al-Attiyah had a 51-point cushion over al-Rajhi ahead of the Rallye du Maroc, and yesterday's stage win means it is no longer possible for the Saudi driver to score at least 52 points in the rally to have a shot at the title. In the 2023 World Rally-Raid Championship, the Qatari star has won three out of the four events so far, namely the Dakar Rally, Sonora Rally and Desafío Ruta 40.

QOC Secretary-General attends GCC Olympic Committees executive board meet





QOC Secretary-General Jassim bin Rashid al-Buenain attended the 97th Executive Board meeting of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Olympic Committees in Muscat, Oman, yesterday.

CHESS / QATAR MASTERS

Carlsen stages recovery as Narayanan takes sole lead

'THIS GAME WAS A LITTLE BIT TOUGHER THAN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN BUT I AM HAPPY TO WIN'

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Former winner and a five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway yesterday recovered from his draw in the previous round to defeat Indian GM Subramaniyam Bharath on day five of the $120,000 Qatar Masters where Indian GM SL Narayanan has the sole lead.

Carlsen, the world's top-ranked player, now has 3.5 points and is in 14th place overall after five rounds at Lusail Sports Arena.

The Norwegian's victory yesterday was a welcome relief for the world champion who had drawn his previous two games. Carlsen played a solid game yesterday and Subramaniam was unable to find any weaknesses in his position.

Narayanan, seeded 13th in the tournament, yesterday defeated India's D Gukesh. Narayanan has 4.5 points to sit at the top of the standings.

"I knew that he doesn't play Bishop C5 so I thought let's go for this," Carlsen said after his win yesterday.

"... G6 surprised me a little bit because I expected G5. I mean it wasn't an unpleasant surprise for me. These systems are very playable," he added.

"This game was a little bit tougher than it should have been but I am happy to win.

"The rest day has come which I desperately needed," he said with a smile. "I am going to play golf. I mean I am terrible at golf (smiles) but I love to play the game. I will play with my sister and brother-in-law. I think that will be good," he added.

American Hikaru Nakamura, the world's third-ranked player, yesterday was held to a draw by Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov. Nakamura has 4 points and is in second place.

Dutchman Anish Giri, world's seventh-ranked player, suffered his first loss of the tournament to Rudik Makarian. Giri has 3.5 points and has fallen to 33rd place. Giri's loss to Makarian was a surprise as he is one of the most talented players in the world. However, Makarian played a strong game and Giri was unable to recover from his early mistakes.

Indian GM Arjun Erigaisi, seeded sixth in the tournament, drew with Kazakh Rinat Jumabayev. Erigaisi has 4 points and is in 4th spot. Also yesterday, Uzbek GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov beat Indian GM Venkataraman Karthik to sit confident at 4 points after the fifth round.

In other results, UAE's Salem Abdul Rahman lost to Iran's Parham Maghsoodloo while Seyed Khalil Mousavi (Iran) drew with Grigoriy Oparin of the US, and Algerian Bilel Bellahcene defeated India's Nubairshah Shaikh Mohamed.



World champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway and Subramaniyam Bharath of India pondering over their moves during fifth round of Qatar Masters at the Lusail Multipurpose Hall in Doha yesterday.



Qatar's Hussein Aziz plans his next move yesterday.



India's SL Narayanan (left) mulls a move against compatriot D Gukesh.

Erigaisi and Nakamura are both within a half-point of the lead, and they will be looking to close the gap in the coming rounds. Erigaisi is a rising star in the chess world and he has already defeated several top-ranked players in this tournament. Nakamura is a former world champion and he is always a threat in any tournament he enters.

The sixth round competitions will start tomorrow at 3:00pm.

In the International B Championship, Tolentino Rustum of the Philippines is top of the standings at the end of the fifth round with 5 points. Rustum is a very talented player and will be looking to maintain his lead in the coming rounds.

QATAR'S AZIZ THRILLED

Qatari chess player Hussein Aziz expressed his happiness at participating in the Qatar Masters, which includes a number of world champions and is considered one of the strongest open tournaments on the global stage.

"I am certainly happy to be present in the third edition of the tournament," Aziz said yesterday.

"I have been present in the previous two editions and I know that the competition is very difficult in light of the presence of the top seeds in the world as well as the holders of international titles," he added.

"I was able to achieve good results with 5 rounds of the tournament and I am somewhat satisfied with the outcome. I will strive to gain more points during the remaining four rounds in order to improve my international ranking," he added.

Aziz stressed taking part in the Qatar Masters tournament in the presence of players like Carlsen and Nakamura was a memorable experience.

"I believe that the International Championship B is an important occasion for young male and female players in Qatar and the region.

"The Qatari national team players stand to gain experience when they play with various competitors, in addition to the fact that their presence alongside the champions of the game at the global level has many other gains too," Aziz concluded.

SPORT

MOTOGP

Bagnaia wins to reclaim title lead as Martin crashes

'I THINK WE WERE DESERVING A RACE LIKE THIS'

AFP
Pertamina Mandalika International Street Circuit, Indonesia

Italy's Francesco Bagnaia won the Indonesia MotoGP yesterday with a spectacular ride that took him back to the top of the championship standings after rival Jorge Martin crashed out.

Maverick Vinales (Aprilia) came in a close second behind the 26-year-old Ducati star, with Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha) in third at the Mandalika circuit on the Indonesian resort island of Lombok.

Bagnaia made a mesmerising surge from 13th to the top spot after rising to the podium places within the first four laps, refusing to let Pramac's Martin punish him further for a poor performance in practice and qualifying.

It was set to be another dream double weekend for Martin after winning Saturday's sprint and taking the lead from the green light, up from sixth, to dominate the early stages of the race.

But it quickly turned into a nightmare for the 25-year-old Spaniard when he crashed on lap 14 of yesterday's main event, a potentially huge moment in the title race. Vinales put the pressure on Bagnaia in the late stages after being overtaken, coming to within four-tenths of a second of the pack leader.

But the Italian, known for his phenomenal defence, saw out the race to turn the tables on Martin, opening up an 18-point gap with just five race weekends left and prompting wild celebrations in his garage.

"I think we were deserving a race like this," Bagnaia told reporters.

"(I was) doing the maximum I could then when I saw Martin going, I said to myself 'take care of the tyres' and that was the correct thing. I am very, very happy."

He later told a news conference that he was frustrated before yesterday's race because he had been "struggling a lot" on new tyres, and worked into the night with his team.

Martin, who was several seconds clear when he crashed, said handing the title advantage to Bagnaia had not affected him.



First-placed Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia celebrates with the trophy during the podium ceremony of the Indonesian Grand Prix MotoGP at the Mandalika International Circuit in Kuta Mandalika, Central Lombok, Indonesia, yesterday. *(AFP)*

"It happens. I was still pushing... and still focused on being fast," he said.

"I did an amazing race until that point. I have to be calm, (there's) still 10 races to go, still a long way."

Frenchman Quartararo said he was unhappy with his speed but content with his spot on the podium.

"To be back in the podium, from Austin to India was a long time, now from India to here was shorter so really happy," he told reporters.

It was a superlative weekend for Italian Marco Bezzecchi, the Mooney VR46 rider who surprised by riding just a week after surgery on a broken collarbone.

Starting from ninth on the grid, he produced a heroic ride to fifth behind Fabio Di Giannantonio.

That kept him 63 points behind in the title race, which he still has a slim chance of winning.

The race was marred by a series of crashes in hot and humid conditions, with only 14 riders out of 21 finishing the race.

Marc Marquez's race ended when he slid off the track in lap eight, with the Spaniard shouting to the sky as he left his Honda bike after a dismal weekend in which he also failed to complete Saturday's sprint race.

Marquez will join Gresini Racing for the 2024 season.

Luca Marini, who immediately lost his pole position to Martin from the green light, saw his day go from bad to worse when he went down at turn 10 after being nudged by Brad Binder, sliding off the track.

Bagnaia, Martin and Bezzecchi will head to Australia with just five race weekends left to see who can come out on top in one of the closest MotoGP battles for years.

In the Moto2 race, Pedro Acosta took first place to increase his lead in the championship standings, cruising to victory more than two seconds in front of Aron Canet.

Brazil's Diogo Moreira won the Moto3 race for his first win after a last-lap scrap with Daniel Holgado, who closed the gap on second-place Ayumu Sasaki in the overall standings.

RESULT
1. Francesco Bagnaia (ITA/Ducati) 41min 20.293sec, 2. Maverick Vinales (ESP/Aprilia) 0.306, 3. Fabio Quartararo (FRA/Yamaha) 0.433, 4. Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA/Ducati) 6.962, 5. Marco Bezzecchi (ITA/Ducati-VR46) 11.111, 6. Brad Binder (RSA/KTM) 11.228, 7. Jack Miller (AUS/KTM) 12.474, 8. Enea Bastianini (ITA/Ducati) 12.684, 9. Alex Rins (ESP/Honda) 22.540, 10. Aleix Espargaro (ESP/Aprilia) 30.468

World championship standings
1. Francesco Bagnaia (ITA/Ducati) 346, 2. Jorge Martin (ESP/Ducati-Pramac) 328 pts, 3. Marco Bezzecchi (ITA/Ducati-VR46) 283, 4. Brad Binder (RSA/KTM) 211, 5. Aleix Espargaro (ESP/Aprilia) 177, 6. Maverick Vinales (ESP/Aprilia) 165, 7. Johann Zarco (FRA/Ducati-Pramac) 162, 8. Luca Marini (ITA/Ducati-VR46) 144, 9. Jack Miller (AUS/KTM) 135, 10. Fabio Quartararo (FRA/Yamaha) 132

Selected
16. Marc Marquez (ESP/Honda) 64

TENNIS

Hurkacz beats Rublev to win Shanghai Masters in thriller

AFP
Shanghai

Hubert Hurkacz saved a match point before defeating fifth seed Andrey Rublev 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (10/8) to win a thrilling Shanghai Masters final yesterday.

It was the big-serving Pole's second Masters triumph, to go with the one he won in Miami in 2021, and a seventh ATP title in all.

"It was such a battle, especially emotionally," the 16th seed said after surviving a nail-biting third-set tie break in front of the watching Roger Federer.

"I had a match point and Andrey hit an amazing serve and then he had a match point and then I had some match points.

"It was back and forth and such a tricky match."

Hurkacz had Rublev under pressure early and broke the Russian with a vicious whipped forehand that Rublev had no chance of returning to lead 4-2 in the first set.

The 25-year-old Rublev let out an angry roar in response and then Hurkacz easily held his own booming serve to go up 5-2.

The Pole Hurkacz came into the final with a tournament-leading 77 aces and Rublev could not handle his blistering serve.

Hurkacz sealed the first set in 31 minutes – and it was inevitably with another ace. He sent down 21 over the course of a topsy-turvy final.

It was the first set that Rublev had dropped in Shanghai.

But Rublev, who won the Monte Carlo Masters in April, struck back to break his opponent's torpedo of a serve for a 2-0 lead at the start of the second set.

A rejuvenated Rublev kept the 26-year-old Hurkacz at bay to send them into a deciding third set. Rublev on Saturday described his angry outbursts in his semi-final win over Grigor Dimitrov as "ugly" and he was struggling again with his emotions at times. In contrast, Hurkacz went about his business with quiet determination.

Serving at 4-5 in a gripping third set, Rublev saved a match point – having been booed by the crowd moments earlier for aggressively approaching and shouting at courtside photographers.

The battling duo went into the tie break, where Hurkacz finally prevailed.



Poland's Hubert Hurkacz celebrates with the winner's trophy after defeating Russia's Andrey Rublev in their final at the Shanghai Masters yesterday. *(AFP)*

ZHENG TAKES SECOND CAREER TITLE AT ZHENGZHOU OPEN



Zheng Qinwen swept to her second career title – her first on home soil – at the Zhengzhou Open yesterday, winning a hard-fought three-set final and celebrating with an impromptu karaoke session at the trophy ceremony. The 21-year-old capped an incredible week with a 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 victory over Czech seventh-seed Barbora Krejcikova to become just the third Chinese woman to win a singles title at the WTA 500 level or higher, after Li Na and Zheng Saisai. *(AFP)*

FOOTBALL

Italy cruise as Denmark edge towards Euro spot


Italy' players celebrate after their victory over Malta in Euro 2024 qualifier match in Bari, Italy. *(Reuters)*

AFP
Paris

Reigning champions Italy eased to a 4-0 victory over Malta in Euro 2024 qualifying on Saturday, while Denmark strengthened their position and dented the hopes of outsiders Kazakhstan.

Giacomo Bonaventura curled in his first Italy goal and Domenico Berardi produced a fine strike of his own to double the lead in Bari. Berardi struck again in the second half before Davide Frattesi rounded off a comfortable evening for Luciano Spalletti's side who kept hold of second place in Group C ahead of next week's showdown with England. Italy, with a game in hand, closed to within three points of England going into their clash at Wembley.

Ukraine are level with Italy after a 2-0 win over North Macedonia in Prague. Georgiy Sudakov put Ukraine ahead on 30 minutes and substitute Oleksandr Karavaiev sealed victory deep into stoppage time, ahead of their visit to Malta next week. Denmark avenged their shock loss to Kazakhstan in March as Robert Skov netted twice in a 3-1 win in Copenhagen.

Jonas Wind set the Danes, semi-finalists at Euro 2020, on their way before Skov scored a quick-fire double either side of half-time.

Kazakhstan pulled one back via Yan Vorogovskiy but they fell four points off the pace in Group H.

Benjamin Sesko's brace powered Slovenia to a 3-0 win over Finland in Ljubljana.

Sesko's first came from the penalty spot and the RB Leipzig forward added another with a clinical finish, taking him to eight goals in his last 11 international appearances.

Defender Erik Janza grabbed a late third for Slovenia, who lead Denmark at the top on goal difference. The two countries meet in Copenhagen on November 17.

GOLF

Koepka wins LIV Jeddah; Gooch claims points title

AFP
Jeddah

Brooks Koepka defended his title at the LIV Golf Jeddah in Saudi Arabia yesterday and Talor Gooch pocketed $18mn for winning the season-long individual title. Koepka shot a 2-under-par 68 on Sunday to finish at 14-under 196 before defeating Gooch on the second playoff hole at Royal Greens Golf and Country Club in King Abdullah Economic City. Koepka birdied two of his last three holes and added another birdie on his second playoff hole to seize his third victory on the LIV circuit. Koepka earned $4mn for winning the tournament.

Koepka , however, was unaware that he won an additional $4mn for finishing third in the individual standings. "Sweet. It's a good feeling," Koepka told reporters with a laugh. Gooch, who shot a 62 yesterday, walked away as the big winner after surpassing Cameron Smith of Australia and Bryson DeChambeau to capture the season-long points race. By comparison, Gooch earned $9,250,299 while earning one win in 123 starts on the PGA Tour.

Gooch won three events and recorded five top-10 finishes this season, worth more than $15mn more. "I just think it's a validation to the golfer than I am to the hard work that we've put in for years and years," Gooch said.



Chebli and De Jager clinch victories; Alawar impress



Mansour Chebli and Page De Jager clinched victories in two race categories each, Jad Alawar impressed by winning two podium spots as the Qatar National Sprint returned with thrilling action after a seven-month break on Saturday. At the Lusail Circuit Sports Club Car Park, Chebli – driving two Renault Clios - recorded the fastest lap times to win both Open Class 1 and Production Class 1 in the fourth round of the popular series to extend Championship leads in both classes. De Jager won Open Class 1 in her Mitsubishi Eclipse before securing the victory in the Women's category later. Alawar won the Open Class 2 in his Mitsubishi Evo 8 and came second in the Open Class 01 event in a Renault Clio. Maher Serre and Francesco Fornaciari emerged victorious in the Production Classes 2 and 3 respectively. The fifth and penultimate round of the series, organized by the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF), will be held on November 25.

PREVIEW

Cummins wants Aussies to turn things around quickly

'EVERY GAME NOW BECOMES ALMOST LIKE A FINAL. YOU'VE GOT TO WIN JUST ABOUT ALL OF THEM.'

AFP
Lucknow, India

Australia captain Pat Cummins admitted yesterday the five-time champions have "got to start winning and start winning quick" to rescue their faltering World Cup campaign.

Australia have lost both their opening matches, by six wickets to hosts India and 134 runs to South Africa, their heaviest defeat at a World Cup.

Despite boasting the batting firepower of David Warner and Steve Smith, they have yet to post a total of 200.

"We're obviously 0-2, so we've got to start winning and start winning quick," said Cummins ahead of today's clash against Sri Lanka in Lucknow.

"Every game now becomes almost like a final. You've got to win just about all of them."

The figures so far make for grim reading for Australia.

None of their batsmen have made a half-century with Smith top-scoring with 46 against India and Marnus Labuschagne matching that modest mark in the rout by South Africa.

They have also been hamstrung by their fielding performances.

Against India, Virat Kohli was dropped on 12 before he went on to make a match-winning 85.

Had the catch been taken, India, chasing just 200 to win, would have been teetering at 20-4.

It got worse against South Africa where five chances went down.

Needing 312 to win, Australia slumped to 70-6 and were reduced to a damage limitation exercise in an effort to shore up their run rate.



Australia's Mitchell Starc (right) and Josh Hazlewood attend a practice session on the eve of their 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup match against Sri Lanka in Lucknow yesterday.



Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis (left) listens to team consultant Mahela Jayawardene during a practice session in Lucknow yesterday. *(AFP)*

"No doubt we haven't been up to the standard that we like to hold," said Cummins. "We've been off the mark and been outplayed both games. It's not ideal at all. I think everyone was a little bit flat after the last game."

Australia are second from bottom of the 10-team table, behind even the Netherlands and propped up only by Afghanistan.

Today, they tackle fellow winless side Sri Lanka who have had no problems scoring runs - 326 against South Africa and 344 in the game with Pakistan.

Unfortunately for the 1996 champions, they conceded a World Cup record 428 to the Proteas while Pakistan's pursuit to win by six wickets was the highest successful chase in tournament history.

Sri Lanka came out on top 3-2 in a five-match series with Australia on home soil in June last year. However, Australia eased to a comfortable 87-run win when they sides met at the 2019 World Cup at The Oval.

"Looking back at 2019, India and South Africa were the two teams that we lost to in the round games there," added Cummins.

"I think in the last year, they're kind of the two teams that we've had the most trouble against.

"So the opportunity now is we've got some teams we haven't played for a while that we've had a lot of success against and we can be really confident when we go out there."

Mendis happy to take over as Sri Lanka captain

Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis will not change his aggressive batting approach after taking over the captaincy two games into the World Cup when team mate Dasun Shanaka was ruled out of the tournament with injury.

Shanaka sustained a thigh muscle injury in Tuesday's six-wicket loss to Pakistan and the 32-year-old will need three weeks to recover, with Chamika Karunaratne replacing him in the squad.

Mendis is among the tournament's top scorers with 198 runs in two games and his first match as captain will be today's clash with Australia who are also without a win in the group stage. "I am very happy to have the captaincy and I hope to play in the future in the same way as I have played so far, because I don't have anything to change," Mendis told reporters yesterday.

"I've had previous experience as a captain. I've also held the position of captain in practice matches here. Speaking about my batting, I aim to maintain this level of performance. I prefer playing in a manner that aligns with the team's requirements."

Mendis said Sri Lanka would miss all-rounder Shanaka, describing his absence as a "significant disadvantage".

"As a team, we deeply regret his absence. Moreover, when we previously lost Wanidu Hasaranga, we made an addition to the team to compensate for his absence," Mendis said.

WHO SAID WHAT



England's captain Jos Buttler celebrates after the run out of Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz by David Willey in New Delhi yesterday. *(Reuters)*

New Delhi: Who said what at the Cricket World Cup yesterday, the 11th day of the 2023 tournament:

"This is for the people back home who have been affected by the earthquake. As players and as a team, I wanted to dedicate my award to them."
- Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman after the 69-run win against champions England, dedicating his man of the match award to victims of the recent quakes back home.

"Jeez, we got a lot right. I'm buzzing, very excited and I'm going to enjoy tonight."
- Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott on the win.

"It's a tough loss to take. Congratulations to Afghanistan, they outplayed us today. They've got a really skilful attack, some fantastic spinners especially."
- England captain Jos Buttler

"We're obviously 0-2, so we've got to start winning and start winning quick."
- Australia captain Pat Cummins ahead of Monday's clash against Sri Lanka in Lucknow.

"No doubt we haven't been up to the standard that we like to hold. We've been off the mark and been outplayed both games."
- Cummins on the heavy defeats suffered by Australia against India and South Africa.

"Usually I'm too tired to celebrate. But that is one occasion where I did celebrate."
- India fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah on his new 'temple pointing' wicket celebration.

"To be honest I never thought that I would play a World Cup because I have come from so low (background)."
- India fast bowler Mohamed Siraj who feared his humble roots as the son of a Hyderabad auto-rickshaw driver would shatter his dreams of playing international cricket.

"It didn't seem like an ICC event to be brutally honest."
- Pakistan director of cricket Mickey Arthur on the absence of fans from the country inside the 132,000-capacity stadium.

"It felt good - it was one of those days."
- India fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah after his man of the match display in the seven-wicket rout of Pakistan.

"What a waste of opportunity on a great batting wicket. Disappointed. Very disappointed."
- Former Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar on X.

'NEVER THOUGHT I'D PLAY AT WORLD CUP,' SAYS RICKSHAW DRIVER'S SON SIRAJ

Ahmedabad, India: Paceman **Mohamed Siraj** feared his humble roots as the son of an auto-rickshaw driver would shatter his dreams of playing at the World Cup.

On Saturday, however, the 29-year-old fast bowler played a crucial role in India's seven-wicket rout of arch-rivals Pakistan at Ahmedabad's 132,000-seater ground, the world's biggest cricket arena.

He dismissed opener Abdullah Shafique lbw for 20 and later claimed the prize wicket of Pakistan captain Babar Azam who had made 50.

From 155-2, Pakistan collapsed to 191 all out in 42.5 overs.

"To be honest I never thought that I would play a World Cup because I have come from so low (background)," Hyderabad native Siraj told reporters.

Siraj, whose rickshaw-driving father died in 2020, rose from his humble beginnings to play in the cash-soaked Indian Premier League. He made his ODI debut in 2019 and Test bow the following year.



"Now I am playing so it is a matter of achievement for me. India and Pakistan are known for their high intensity and high-pressure games and today I saw that and I felt good."

Siraj went wicketless for 76 runs in India's previous win over Afghanistan but came roaring back on Saturday. He insisted his previous performance did not affect his mindset coming into the key clash.

"Everyone has an off day. The graph can come down sometimes and one bad day doesn't make me a bad performer," said Siraj, who singled out Shafique's wicket as being a planned strike.

"So I keep my confidence up with the fact that I am bowling well. This confidence helps me in my bowling and I have backed myself to do that and got the result today."

Siraj was ably supported by the rest of the bowlers with Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja and Hardik Pandya also taking two wickets each.

"Our bowling unit is doing so well, it's not that just one bowler is performing," said Siraj.

"Everyone is putting up his hand even if someone is not getting a wicket then he is building pressure and bowling a dot ball. All this will help the team succeed."

India remain favourites to win the tournament after they registered their third win in as many matches to lead the 10-team table.

"This is a World Cup match, and every match is very important for us, not just an India-Pakistan match," said Siraj.

"We are focusing on one match at a time. We played three and won three. The environment is very good."

FOCUS

Fit-again Australian opener Head back in the nets

Reuters
Bengaluru

Australian opener Travis Head has returned to batting for the first time since he fractured his left hand and could join the World Cup squad on Friday, Cricket Australia said yesterday.

Head broke his finger in a one-day international against South Africa last month but was included in the 15-man World Cup squad as selectors hoped he would be fit in time for the latter stages of the tournament.

If his recovery is on schedule, the left-handed batter is set to fly out of Adelaide on Thursday and land in India a day later, with an eye on a return for Australia's group fixture against the Netherlands in New Delhi on Oct 25.

"It's coming along well, and probably better than we hoped," Head told *cricket.com.au*. "When we decided not to go with surgery, which would have meant a 10-week recovery, we were told it would be minimum six weeks with the splint before we could look at playing again.

"Going by that plan, the Netherlands game will be just under six weeks from impact which is a pretty aggressive date so everything would have to go perfectly from here to make that deadline."

Head says there was stiffness having had a splint for four weeks but was able to bat and play some shots.

Australia are winless in two games and sit ninth in the standings ahead of today's game against Sri Lanka in Lucknow.

He had been having a magnificent run the ODI side, averaging 60.84 with a strike rate of 119.84 since his return in 2022.

Former Australia captain Aaron Finch said the impact of his absence had been clear during the team's early struggles. "Sometimes it's not the amount of runs he gets but the pressure he puts on the opposition because they know he's going to come hard, they can panic and get a bit defensive in their mindset and then (David) Warner gets away, and if (Mitchell) Marsh comes in, he gets away as well," Finch told *ESPNcricinfo*.

Australia are yet to score a half-century in the tournament and have been bowled out for 199 and 177 in their two games. But it will be asking a lot of Head to come in and perform straightaway.

While the selectors have put huge stock in what Head is capable of, there remains a possibility they still opt to replace him.

"There's still a few hurdles we need to clear, and everything needs to fall into place from my end and from the team's point of view over there before the final decision is made," Head said.



MATCH REPORT

Afghanistan shock England after Gurbaz, Mujeeb heroics

'IT'S A VERY PROUD MOMENT TO BE HERE IN THE WORLD CUP BEATING THE LAST CHAMPIONS'



Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman (second left) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of England's Chris Woakes during the 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup match in New Delhi yesterday. *(AFP)*

SCOREBOARD

Afghanistan

R. Gurbaz run out	80
I. adran c Root b Rashid	28
R. Shah st Buttler b Rashid	3
H. Shahidi b Root	14
A. Omarzai c Woakes b Livingstone	19
I. Alikhil c Curran b Topley	58
M. Nabi c Root b Wood	9
R. Khan c Root b Rashid	23
M. Ur Rahman c Root b Wood	28
Naveen-ul-Haq run out (Buttler)	5
F. Farooqi not out	2
Extras (lb1, nb3, w11)	**15**
Total (all out, 49.5 overs)	**284**

Fall of wickets: 1-114 (Ibrahim Zadran), 2-122 (Rahmat Shah), 3-122 (Rahmanullah Gurbaz), 4-152 (Azmatullah Omarzai), 5-174 (Hashmatullah Shahidi), 6-190 (Mohamed Nabi), 7-233 (Rashid Khan), 8-277 (Ikram Alikhil), 9-277 (Mujeeb Ur Rahman), 10-284 (Naveen-ul-Haq

Bowling: Woakes 4-0-41-0 (2w), Topley 8.5-1-52-1 (3w, 1nb), Curran 4-0-46-0 (2nb), Adil Rashid 10-1-42-3 (1w), Wood 9-0-50-2, Livingstone 10-0-33-1, Root 4-0-19-1

England

J. Bairstow lbw b Fazalhaq Farooqi	2
D. Malan c Zadran b Nabi	32
J. Root b Mujeeb	11
H. Brook c Alikhil b Mujeeb	66
J. Buttler b Naveen-ul-Haq	9
L. Livingstone lbw b Rashid Khan	10
S. Curran c Shah b Nabi	10
C. Woakes b Mujeeb Ur Rahman	9
A. Rashid c Nabi b Rashid Khan	20
M. Wood b Rashid Khan	18
R. Topley not out	15
Extras (lb4, nb1, w8)	**13**
Total (all out, 40.3 overs)	**215**

Fall of wickets: 1-3 (Bairstow), 2-33 (Root), 3-68 (Malan), 4-91 (Buttler), 5-117 (Livingstone), 6-138 (Curran), 7-160 (Woakes), 8-169 (Brook), 9-198 (Rashid), 10-215 (Wood)

Bowling: Mujeeb Ur Rahman 10-1-51-3 (1w), Fazalhaq Farooqi 7-0-50-1 (2w), Naveen-ul-Haq 6-1-44-1 (1nb), Mohammad Nabi 6-0-16-2 (1w), Rashid Khan 9.3-1-37-3, Azmatullah Omarzai 2-0-13-0

Result: Afghanistan won by 69 runs

Toss: England

Umpires: Rod Tucker (AUS) and Sharfuddoula (BAN)

Match Referee: Jeff Crowe (NZL)



Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott shakes hands with England's Adil Rashid after the match in New Delhi yesterday. *(Reuters)*

AFP
New Delhi

Afghanistan pulled off one of the greatest World Cup shocks yesterday when they defeated defending champions England by 69 runs in New Delhi.

Chasing 285 to win, after opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz had hit a blistering 80, England were bowled out for 215 despite Harry Brook's 66 with spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan claiming three wickets each.

"It's a very proud moment to be here in the World Cup beating the last champions, it is a good moment for the whole nation and the team. A wonderful performance for the bowlers and the batters," said Mujeeb.

The stunning upset gave Afghanistan just their second World Cup win to add to a lone victory over Scotland at the 2015 tournament.

They came into yesterday's clash having lost their opening two games in India and on a 14-match losing World Cup streak.

After Gurbaz and the recalled Ikram Alikhil, with 58, had given them a decent target to defend, Afghanistan's bowlers went to work, striking at regular intervals.

"It was disappointing, having won the toss and elected to bowl," said England skipper Jos Buttler. "Congratulations to Afghanistan, they outplayed us today."

Jonny Bairstow (two) was lbw to Fazalhaq Farooqi in the second over before Joe Root was clean bowled by 22-year-old man of the match Mujeeb for 11.

Mohamed Nabi got rid of Dawid Malan, who made 140 against Bangladesh, for 32 to precipitate a slide which saw England slump to 138-6.

Buttler was clean bowled by seamer Naveen-ul-Haq for nine, Rashid Khan had Liam Livingstone lbw on 10 before Nabi also dismissed Sam Curran (10).

England were tied down, at one stage going more than eight overs without hitting a boundary until Brook managed the team's lone six of the innings in the 31st over.

Mujeeb sent back Chris Woakes before effectively sealing the game in his next over, having Brook caught behind by Alikhil with England at 169-8.

Brook's 66 came off 61 balls with seven fours and a six.

Late fireworks from Adil Rashid (20), Reece Topley (15) and Mark Wood (18) only served to take England past the 200-mark which was clearly not enough.

Earlier, Gurbaz, 21, piled up his runs off 57 balls with eight fours and four sixes to register his eighth score in excess of fifty in his ODI career.

However, he was furious that he was unable to go on to make a sixth century when he was involved in a disastrous run-out mix-up with captain Hashmatullah Shahidi in the 19th over. Gurbaz failed to make his ground and Buttler whipped off the bails from a throw by substitute fielder David Willey.

Gurbaz run-out anger

An angry Gurbaz smashed his bat into a chair as he departed with his team on 122-3.

Gurbaz had needed just 33 balls to get to his half-century as Afghanistan, put into bat, stormed to 100 without loss from 77 deliveries. Once Gurbaz was dismissed, England's spinners dragged the champions back into the contest in the middle overs.

The impressive Adil Rashid finished with 3-42 from his 10 overs having initially broken Afghanistan's 114-run opening stand when he had Ibrahim Zadran (28) caught.

But Alikhil chimed in with a 66-ball 58 after surviving being hit on the shoulder by a 147km/h delivery from fast bowler Mark Wood.

Mujeeb added 28 to the total off 16 balls as Afghanistan finished strongly.

England's seamers endured a day to forget with Sam Curran conceding 46 runs off four overs and new ball bowler Chris Woakes coughing up 41 off his four.

England went into yesterday's game after a loss to New Zealand and victory over Bangladesh while Afghanistan suffered heavy defeats by six wickets to Bangladesh and eight wickets to India.

Mujeeb dedicates Afghanistan win to quake victims

New Delhi: Afghanistan spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman yesterday dedicated his team's stunning Cricket World Cup victory over champions England to the victims of the earthquakes which have rocked his country.

Mujeeb, 22, was man of the match for his three wickets and 28 runs as Afghanistan shocked England by 69 runs in New Delhi.

Earlier yesterday, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake killed two people in western Afghanistan where tremors have claimed at least 1,000 lives this past week.

"This is for the people back home who have been affected by the earthquake. As players and as a team, I wanted to dedicate my award to them," said Mujeeb.

He added: "It's a very proud moment to be here in the World Cup beating the last champions, it is a good moment for the whole nation and the team. A wonderful performance for the bowlers and the batters."

Before yesterday, Afghanistan's only win at a World Cup came back in 2015 on their debut over Scotland. Since that tournament, they were on a 14-match World Cup losing streak.

BOTTOMLINE

Five great upsets at Cricket World Cup

Afghanistan defeated defending champions England by 69 runs at the World Cup yesterday in the first big upset of the 2023 tournament. Here are five other stunning wins in the history of the tournament:

Zimbabwe beat Australia by 13 runs, Nottingham, June 9, 1983

Playing in their first ever One-Day International, Zimbabwe stunned an Australian side boasting the likes of Allan Border, Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson in the opening game of the tournament at Trent Bridge. Batting first, Zimbabwe rode on the back of an undefeated 69 from Duncan Fletcher on their way to 239-6 in 60 overs (the first three World Cups were played over 60 overs). Kepler Wessels top-scored for Australia but they fell short as Fletcher then starred with the ball taking 4-42 after the Aussies had appeared to be cruising on 61 for no loss at one stage.

India beat West Indies by 43 runs, Lord's, June 25, 1983

India shocked the two-time defending champions West Indies in the final having arrived at the World Cup with just 17 wins in their first nine years as an ODI team. India managed to score just 183 with Kris Srikkanth the top scorer with a modest 38 as the West Indies pace battery of Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Malcolm Marshall showed no mercy. But then Mohinder Armanath (3-12) and Madan Lal (3-31) suffocated the flamboyant West Indies batsmen with Viv Richards managing the top score of 33.



Afghanistan players celebrate after the match against England in New Delhi yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Kenya beat West Indies by 73 runs, Pune, February 29, 1996

Kenya struggled to 166 all out in this group stage fixture with Courtney Walsh and Roger Harper taking three wickets apiece. But in what was heralded as one of the greatest ever shocks at the time, the African nation saw opening bowler Rajab Ali claim the prize wicket of Brian Lara for just eight runs. Only Harper and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, whose 19 runs occupied 48 balls, reached double figures for the West Indies who were dismissed for just 93. Maurice Odombe played a captain's role with 3-15 from his 10 overs.

Ireland beat Pakistan by 3 wkts (D/L method), Kingston, March 17, 2007

Ireland marked St Patrick's Day in style by knocking Pakistan out of the 2007 World Cup in Jamaica. The Irish attack skittled out the Asian giants for just 132, with future England paceman Boyd Rankin taking three wickets. Ireland suffered a collapse of their own before Kevin O'Brien and Trent Johnston saw them to victory. But there was a grim postscript to the match when Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer, the former England batsman, died in his hotel room that night.

Ireland beat England by 3 wkts, Bengaluru, March 2 2011

England piled up a seemingly imposing 327 for eight, with Jonathan Trott making 92 and Ian Bell 81 although John Mooney's four-wicket haul prevented a larger total. In reply, Ireland lost William Porterfield before they'd scored a run but Kevin O'Brien seized his chance to shine by smashing a World Cup hundred off just 50 balls, with 13 fours and six sixes.After he was out, Mooney's 33 not out sealed a stunning win with five balls to spare. *(AFP)*