

# Pyjama Cricket: THE CHANGING FACE OF CRICKET

By Sunil Sarpal



Cricket is such a beautiful sport that it occupies a permanent place in the heart of its die-hard follower. But, of late, the game has lost its character dramatically with the advent of shorter versions of the game. This version is just like eating fast food. As food in its proper form when consumed fulfills the appetite of a person and fast food, on the other hand, just fills the tummy. The same way, those astute followers of the game who have tasted the five day version do not enjoy one bit of this slam bang type of cricket and boredom envelops them instantly.

The real tussle between bat and ball is what it calls the real test of a cricketer.

The followers have witnessed how West Indies' 4-pronged fast bowling attack was up against Sunil Manohar Gavaskar. His

defiance, air-tight defense and restrained attack was the hallmark of a batting genius. The West Indies attack was relentless, one after the other, hitting the deck hard and targeting Gavaskar's scalp protected head. Gavaskar was always found up to the task. His perseverance, determination and unflinching application, what to play and what not to. It was a sight to capture.

Now, it seems the game has lost its character and truthfulness.

You bowl and I hit is the mantra in vogue. If I am able to hit it is my luck and if not it is yours.

During those days, till such time if the ball does not start hitting the sweet spot of the willow, the batsman would not unleash his strokes. Neither the aerial route was preferred over ground shots. Nowadays, the trend has changed.

Players are desperate to play IPL because it has become a money spinning wheel. They earn money in crores, just playing one season of IPL consisting of 2 months tournament in a calendar year.

The shorter version first came into force when Kerry Packer introduced night cricket under flood light.

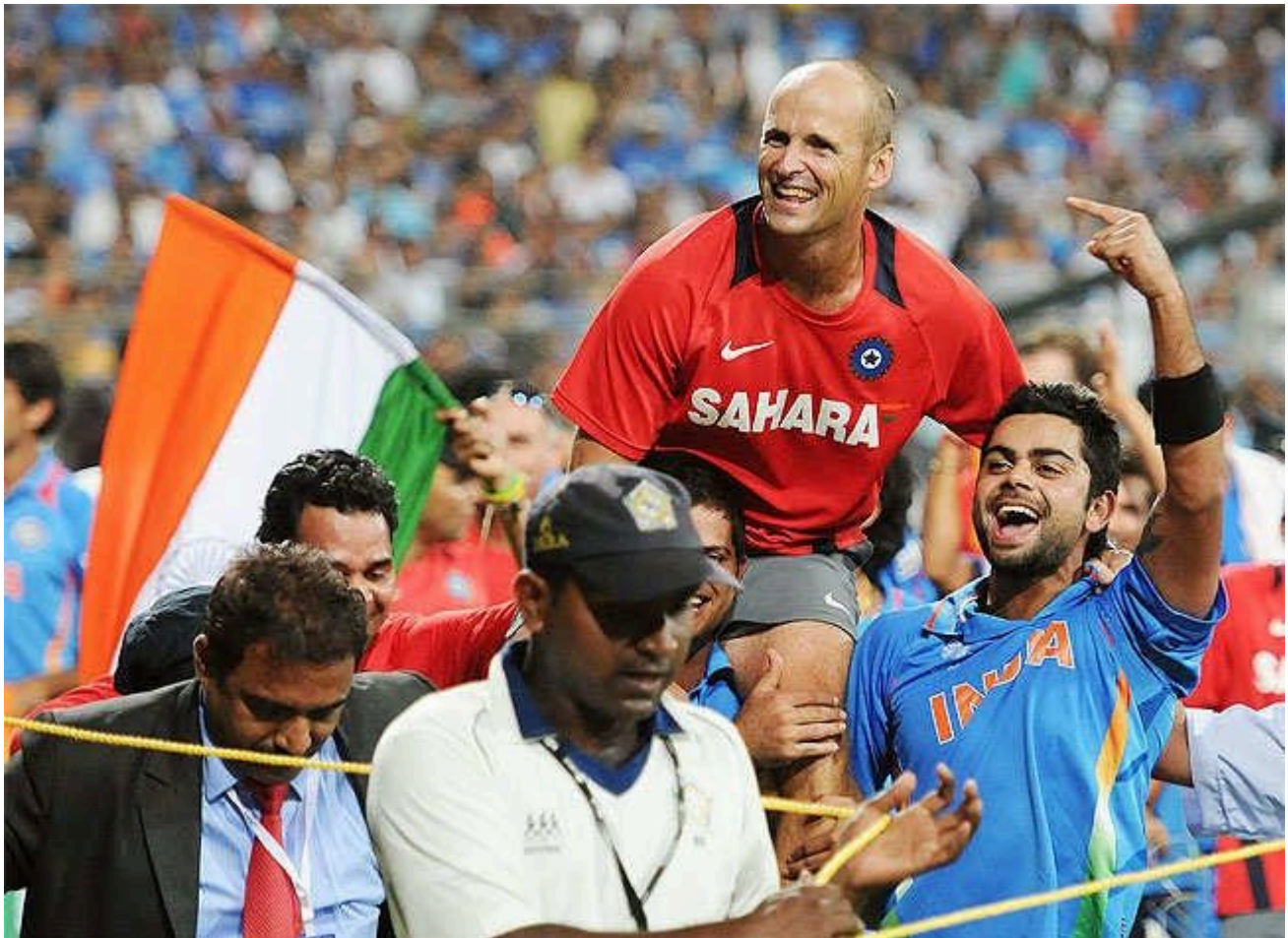
Nowadays money plays a pivotal role in a shorter version of the game and this has resulted in the cricket to a PYJAMA CRICKET.



Courtesy X

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# BCCI in the hunt for Team India Cricket Coach



The most successful coaching stint was from Gary Kirsten  
By **Sunil Sarpal**

Coaching Team India is an onerous task for BCCI. The tenure of Rahul Dravid, Team India Coach, is coming to an end. BCCI is looking for his replacement. In the past, some notable contributions as Team India Coach have come from Gary Kirsten, John Wright, and Ravi Shastri. The most successful coaching stint was from Gary Kirsten. But for his family commitments, he left Team India even though both BCCI and Indian side did not want to part company. John Wright was also a success story so was Ravi Shastri. The credentials of a coach should have man-management skills and recognizing zinks in players and finding solutions to it.

At the moment, India has in its ranks the world class Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Both of them are at the twilight of their illustrious careers. Coaching such stalwarts is a difficult task for a coach.

When Anil Kumble was entrusted with the task of coaching Team India, he had differences with Virat Kohli. This resulted in Kumble's withdrawal from the coaching job. There came a phase in India Cricket when Greg Chappel was appointed as India Coach. During his tenure, Team India's performance nose-dived because he had differences with the then India Captain Saurav Ganguly. BCCI had to remove Greg Chappel to save the team from the ignominy of dismissal performance.

BCCI therefore has to keep all pros and cons in mind for this appointment.

The names that are making round for this job are Tom Moody and VVS Laxman. Tom Moody carries advantage over Laxman because of his previous coaching stint.

First and foremost, BCCI has to ensure that Team India's harmony and unity is not affected with the arrival of a new incumbent for this job. Will the new incumbent prove to be a worthy successor of Rahul Dravid? Because Team India is blended with both youth and experienced players. Indian Team is rich with both pace and spin. India has the batters who can shine in any situation and condition.

BCCI has to ensure that the coach will take the team forward and not indulge in any ego-related problem. The coach should be competent enough to understand the requirements of both experienced pro and new and budding cricketers.

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## **Indian Batsmen with a Midas**

# Touch

By Sunil Sarpal



India has the distinction of producing batsmen with a magical touch and they conquered the most difficult of bowlers. From **Gavaskar** to **Tendulkar** and now **Virat Kohli**. They have been diamonds with a midas touch. By merely watching them play, one can learn the art of batting because they are simply a school unto themselves.

Gavaskar's technique for batting was derived from the Cricketing Text Book. His temperament and concentration was second to none. His shot selection was simply spot on. His technique was fool proof that he would not leave any room between bat and pad.

Sachin Tendulkar was more adventurous and his intent was aggressive in nature. He was considered the God of Cricket by none other than Mathew Hayden of Australia. Tendulkar was born to play cricket and touched the height which no other batsman did. Tendulkar played his game in two phases. When he came into test cricket, he was very aggressive and could hit even four boundaries in one over on a regular basis. A

lot of people and even cricketers idolised him and studied his game to learn the art of batting. Sachin notched up a 100 tons in all formats of the game which is a very formidable task to accomplish.

Now Virat Kohli has picked up the gauntlet. He is beating one record after another at regular intervals. Virat's game is stylised in such a manner that he has become much more stable and assured. His cover drive is perfection personified. The longevity of a career largely depends upon how one adjusts with the given conditions and matches the situation. Perhaps Virat Kohli knows the art of adjustment more than anybody else. Virat is supremely fit and agile even at the age of 36 yrs. His running between the wickets is just like a 20 years old player. He gives a lot of time to exercise and to remain match fit. Virat is inching towards the 100 tons milestone set by Sachin and in all likelihood Virat will surpass this record in style and set new numbers for the next generation.

India's legacy of producing one batsman after another to conquer the world is unique. Who is going to be the next class act is a million dollar question ?

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## **India needs more of Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir**

By **Sunil Sarpal**

Their names should be revered with a lot of respect and gratitude as they are the Role Models in our society.

Both resurrect the society where Administration fails in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities towards mankind,

particularly down-trodden strata of society.

During Covid time, when migrant workers were rendered homeless and hapless, Sonu Sood came to their rescue and provided them with suitable transport so that they could reach their homes safely. In doing so, he had to deal with a high level of dignitaries to get permission to transport them from one state to another. He turned out the messiah for the down-trodden then.

Sonu, by profession, is an actor and plays generally the role of a villain in South movies. But for the above cause, he turned out to be a real hero in the public eye.

Gautam Gambhir, an ex Indian Cricketer is another live example whose heart beats for the poor and down-trodden. He is running 4-5 outlets where free food is supplied to the poor of society. He claims to have no such means to provide food but earn this money by playing competitive cricket.

Society these days has turned selfish and self-centered. They hardly think in terms of less privileged.

Me and mine are the buzzwords. .

Human being sans humanity is in the blood of today's man. As a result, people keep fighting for petty issues.

God provides money to fulfill our basic necessities i.e. ROTI, KAPRA, AND MAKAN.

What is the difference between a human being and animal if the latter consumes animal food We are human beings and humanity should be reflective in our persona i.e. in thought, action and reaction. If not, we need to still improve upon otherwise we remain animals in human form. If we remain animals in human form, what kind of society we are building. What kind of heritage we are leaving behind for our next generation to step into.



When will we improve upon even if people like Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir set unprecedented examples in front of us. If we still do not improve upon, we are cowards and 'C' class citizens of society.

Even if we are rich and people just gather around us, of what use. One of them will stab us on our back and run away with our false pride

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## INDIAN CRICKET ON A HIGH'



By **Sunil Sarpal**

Cricket is basically a game of young legs. The best age for a cricketer is between 20 – 30 yrs. During this time, the legs are untiring, reflexes razor sharp, and enthusiasm of very high level. The moment a mind starts giving a second thought or becomes pessimistic, it is better to throw the towel.

Different pitches present different skill set to batsman. On pacy and bouncy wickets, the ball should be played with soft hands.

India has produced many a talented and crafty batsmen – from Gavaskar to Tendulkar and now Kohli. They are known for their all-weather skills. Their records speak volume of their unflinching approach to game and adaptability to different conditions.

There are two ways to play the game – one calls for feet movement and reaching out to the pitch of the ball before it starts its variations and the other way is hand : eye coordination. Our own Virender Sehwag was the live example of a hand-eye coordination player.

Generally, the game was played along with the ground but with the advent of shorter version of the game, one dayer and T-20, the shots often sails over the heads of fielders. Innovation is the new age cricket. Paddel shots, reverse sweep, scoop etc. and played over wicket keeper are very common these days. Gavaskar used to play along the ground, Tendulkar along the ground and over the top, so also Kohli. The shorter version has made all this possible.

India at the moment is thriving on the talent of Jaiswal and Gill. Both are very talented and take the game of cricket to altogether different level, closing the doors for people like Pujara and Rahane.

India, at the moment has talent in abundance, as a result, people like Ishaan Kishan has no room in the Indian side even though he is young, talented and in-form wicket keeper batsman. Unfortunately, politics too plays its crucial role in making or marring of a career.

India also boasts of world class bowlers, both in pace and spin. Bumrah, Siraj and Shami have all show-cased their impeccable impression on world stage with swing and pace,

leaving no room for Bhuvni – one time front line wrecker-in-chief. Arshdeep and Mukesh Kr also making in-roads in the side from time to time.

Among spinners, Jadeja, Ashween and Kuldeep are the front runners, leaving no room for Chahal and Axar Patel for consideration.

The above set of players are all young, except for Ashween, and they are guided and goaded from time to time by the experienced pros like Kohli and Rohit. Indian side shall be further bolstered with the return of recuperating Rishab Pant.

Being a cricket crazy country and with IPL providing astronomical money to players, the game will reach the level of West Indies team which was led by Clive Lloyd

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## **INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA – TWO TEST SERIES, an EPILOGUE**

By Sunil Sarpal



Match Winners: Bumrah, Siraj and Shami

It was a very short series to judge who the real winner is. Generally when Team India visits Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and England, they take some time to acclimatize and take a stock of the pitch behaviour, weather conditions etc. etc. And in the process the first encounter is won by the host country, taking early advantage in the series.

Generally, in India for fast bowlers the rise of the ball is knee high, whereas, in Australia it is waist high. It therefore becomes a different ball game in India viz-a-viz Australia. In England and New Zealand, the swing imparted by fast bowlers is alarming in proportion. Life for a batsman becomes very difficult in such conditions. That is the reason, life for Indian batters becomes very difficult early on.

Every other batter is not Sachin Tendulkar who used to get adjusted with any condition quickly, be it swing, pace, spin, height imparted by the bowlers.

In South Africa, India had to face the ignominious defeat in the first test in trying conditions. Only KL Rahul could post a century from Indian side.

In the second test, India got the early advantage when SA captain after winning the toss elected to bat first. In a situation when Indian batters were low in confidence after facing first test defeat, they were somewhat relieved off SA fast bowling attack.

Indian pace attack, in particular, Mohd. Siraj bowled magnificently and took 6 SA wickets and India resultantly cleaned up SA with a paltry score of 55 runs on the board. The die had been cast by Mohd. Siraj in the second test and the pendulum shifted in favour of India. India took a lead of 100 odd runs in the first innings.

Bumrah did a Siraj in the second innings when he too scalped six SA wickets and India tasted SA defeat on their own soil.

**Three Indian pacers from time to time have created havoc in the opposition camp, namely Bumrah, Siraj and Shami.**

India is fortunate to have the services of veterans; Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in it's ranks. The other batters viz Gill, Iyer and Rahul take full advantage of their benign presence.

In a team where there is no room for the recuperating Rishab Pant, his replacement, KL Rahul, is doing a yoeman's job for the team with both bat and gloves behind the stumps.

Team India at the moment is hard to challenge and put aside or be dislodged in most conditions.

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# INDIAN CRICKET LEGACY – KAPIL DEV HANDING OVER BATON TO HARDIK PANDYA

By Sunil Sarpal



## Hardik Pandya Kapil Dev

When cricket is discussed on any forum, it is impossible to overlook the name of Kapil Dev, such is his indelible aura and standing in Indian cricket. He was the original captain cool to have lifted one-dayer trophy in 1983 at Lords, England. On way to winning the trophy, a number of players contributed significantly but Kapil's 175 against Zimbabwe was the stand out performance.

Kapil Dev in his hey days was supremely fit and athletically built all-rounder. He was known for his banana out-swing for right hand batsman. It foxed the batsman by the curve it generated. Kapil could also generate height from the wicket to unsettle the batsman. He was India's wrecker-in-chief and the

lone hope in fast bowling. Apart from bowling, he was a reliable batsman too. He was in the mold of a genuine all-rounder for India. Being supremely fit, he never missed a match due to injury in his entire career. In his illustrious career, he played some of the memorable innings with bat to bail out India from the difficult and ignominious situations.

On the other hand, Hardik Pandya is a present day all-rounder in the making. Will he fit into the bill of Kapil Dev is a million dollar question ? India's hopes do not rest on Pandya's shoulders, as was the case with Kapil.

Pandya is an attacking batsman with the ability to hit sixes at will. Pandya is a modern-day batsman, unlike Kapil whose aggression was restraint in nature. Pandya's medium pace bowling is not as lethal as was the case with Kapil. India could rely upon Kapil as a front line bowler whereas Pandya always comes in the slot as fifth bowler in one-dayers variety. In case of Pandya, he carries the reputation of being tagged as injury prone. First, he had back injury which kept him away from active cricket and now he twisted his ankle in ICC trophy.

If an assessment is made between Kapil and Pandya in terms of physicality, Kapil was streets ahead in comparison with Pandya. At times, some kind of fatigue was visible on his face when bowling long spells or in humid conditions.

Both Kapil and Pandya played the game of cricket in different eras. Pandya is the all-rounder in the making in modern cricket. His slam bang batting is more suited to T-20 format.

Pandya should not show much athletic skills on the field which results in his succumbing to injury frequently.. He needs to preserve his energy so that whenever is called upon to bowl, he is able to deliver the goods.

In batting too, Pandya relies heavily on airy-fairy shots. He need not indulge in high-risk shots. He needs to curb his

instincts to hit every ball over the ropes. Pandya should evolve his batting in such a manner so that more often he plays cricketing ground shots and lift the ball when it falls in his zone. Pandya's intent is to slog and not to bat in restrained manner.

Pandya is still to establish himself as a reliable and genuine all-rounder. A long way forward but he should guard against his fragile frame much more seriously.

**In a recent development, Hardik Pandya has been bestowed with the responsibility to lead Mumbai Indians IPL franchise. He will replace Rohit Sharma under whose leadership the Mumbai Indians have won the IPL five times. Rohit's form with the bat has gone down a few notches, hence, this change in leadership. Hardik led the newly formed Gujarat Titans in the last IPL and won a trophy for them. Hardik's rise in stature will open new avenues for him to become India captain in the future.**

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## **Gavaskar's picks of all time great cricketers**

By Sunil Sarpal





### **Sunil Manohar Gavaskar** the last word in cricket

India is a cricket crazy country and cricket is considered a religion here. The cricket stars are idolized and worshipped in India. Stadia chant the names of Sachin, Mahi and Virat whenever they appear on the ground. People just go crazy to witness the exploits of their stars. The followers derive some kind of energy to live their lives watching their idols.

Recently, in an interview, **Sunil Gavaskar** was asked to name three players who impressed him the most in life. Gavaskar named the following players :-



## **Sir Garfield Sobers**

1) According to **Gavaskar**, first comes **Sir Garfield Sobers**. A SouthPaw, he could bowl spin and pace in equal measure. He could don the gloves behind the stumps too. Sobers was exceptionally athletic hence a smart fielder. He was a treat to watch with the bat.

2) **Gavaskar** rated **GR Vishwanath** as second in ranking. Vishu during his playing days scored centuries on difficult wickets. Gavaskar rates Vishu a much better batsman than him.



### **Kapil Dev and GR Vishwanath**

3) Third in the ranking is **Kapil Dev**. Gavaskar opines that Kapil was a genuine swing bowler and could win matches of his own single handedly. He was a talented batsman too in attacking mode. He could win matches as a batsman too. Kapil was an extraordinary athlete and his fielding was of a very high class. In his illustrious career, he never missed a match due to injury. He was the India captain in 1983 when India lifted the One- day-cup.

Sunil Manohar Gavaskar has been a street smart cricketer, commentator and expert. His views are unbiased and should not be taken in a lighter vein. His cricketing assessment and class is unparalleled. He is an astute student of the game of cricket and a cricketing school unto himself.

This interview suggests that these three past cricketers need be given more responsibility either to run the cricket

academies or impart their valuable knowledge to budding cricketers thru lectures etc.

One can take a cue from the **Dennis Lillee** run **MRF Pace Academy**. This academy trains fast bowlers under the watchful eye of Aussie legend **Dennis Lillee**. MRF has produced a record number of International bowlers.

Recently, **Afghanistan** has performed exceptionally well in the just concluded ICC Trophy. Afghanistan has been able to do so because India's ex cricketer **Ajay Jadeja** is their coach.

The above three players were Gavaskar's picks. What are yours? Post your picks in the comment box below.

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# **Hapless India lost to the Aussie assault in the World Cup '23 Finale**

By Sunil Sarpal



Indian PM Narendra Modi and Australian Deputy PM, Richard Marles Congratulate Australian Captain Pat Cummins

It is not digestible that India lost to Aussies in the CWC '23 finals while winning all 10 matches played on the trot. Even in the build up to the final, India beat Aussie comprehensively. But India's performance in the final is not worth taking note of. Number of blemishes on the part of India are the cause of concern.

A paltry score of 240 runs was not a difficult target for opposition and that too Aussies.

The Ahmedabad pitch where the ball was not coming on to bat at rapid pace was not an easy pitch to bat on. The pitch too assisted spinners, as well. The life was not a cake walk for batters. In a situation like this, application was the key which Aussie's Travis Head did to perfection. It was not easy

for Head in the middle but he stood his ground after being beaten invariably. He posted a resolute century for Aussie cause. Head turned out to be the difference between India's victory or defeat.



Travis Head – Match Winner

Team India definitely is a top class team but in key matches they are in total disarray.

Shubham Gill's shot was not on, playing an airy fairy shot at a crucial juncture was the first turning point of the match. That turned the tide in Australia's favour. Gill is the most important cog in Indian line up. Aussies took full advantage with early in-roads and put a break on the run-rate.

Iyer too was undone by Cummins's special and India's ship was dismantled by these two important scalps.

Rohit, Kohli and Rahul were in good nick but could not extend their innings to centuries.

Surya looked the most vulnerable of the lot because his game

is stylized in T-20 mode. But this happens to be a situation when wickets were tumbling in regular intervals and Surya's stay in the middle became absolutely inevitable. He was always found in two-minds whether to go for his shots or play a restrained knock. Surya never looks at ease when in defensive mode.

Three players were primarily responsible for India's dismal game – GILL, IYER AND SURYA.



### Heads Roll as AUSSIES Celebrate

Among Indian pacers, in particular, Bumrah was unlucky not to have gotten the edges of the bat. He was swinging the ball enormously but of not much avail.

Another disappointing factor was KL Rahul's show behind the stumps.

There is a saying that the captain should not tinker with the winning ways. Rohit did this mistake by opting to open the attack with Bumrah and Shami and not with Bumrah and Siraj. Shami comes in as a first change. Pundits will not comment on

this change because Shami is the highest wicket taker in the tournament.

To conclude, Aussies is a team well equipped to play key matches in style which they did to perfection and lifted the ICC Trophy.

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# Indian Juggernaut beats New Zealand, thunders into ICC World Cup '23 finale against Australia

By Sunil Sarpal



How can you describe VIRAT KOHLI? He considers Sachin Tendulkar as his hero although he has surpassed Sachin's record of 49 ODI tons. Virat Kohli stands tall with 50 ODI



tons and is supremely fit at the age of 35 yrs. Virat's approach to batting is monumental. He plays his game studied with sublime shots along the ground. He takes full measure of the proceedings which include pitch behaviour, movement or spin imparted by bowlers before launching for his shots. He brings in some kind of stability to the proceedings so that from the other end batters can bloom and maintain a healthy run rate. In other words, Virat is the backbone of Indian Cricket whose presence in the middle gives lot of confidence to other batters to express themselves.



Virat Kohli – Sky is not the limit for his sixers

In the on-going ICC tournament, India has knocked down all the teams so as to pave a berth in the finals.

In the semis, India was pitted against New Zealand considered to be one of the favourites to lift the trophy.

After winning the all-crucial toss, Rohit chose to bat first on a wicket where there was not much on offer for the bowlers.

Rohit, as an opener, launched a blistering attack on Kiwi bowlers and set the tone of the match with his trademark shots. Rohit's ability to see the ball early enables him to pull and hook the ball disdainly. Right from the word go, he

puts the opposition on backfoot, such is his class to command the proceedings. His brutal attack up-front leaves the bowlers a demoralized unit.

All Indian batters are in prime form, be it Gill, Iyer, Rahul or Jadeja.

The highlights of the match was contributions from two centurians – KOHLI and IYER, 80 by Gill and 47 by Rohit.

Iyer's 6-hitting ability enabled India to put up a mammoth total of 397 runs on board. A target such as this is in itself a daunting task for Kiwi batters.

in this tournament, India's basket of pace bowlers is overflowing. In Bumrah, Shami and Siraj, India cannot expect a better pace attack. Shami, in particular, makes in-roads when there is a sign of partnership build up. In this tournament, Shami has bagged 5 and above wicket haul three times. 5 wickets are considered equivalent to a century. In the semifinal he took an astounding 7 wicket haul.



Mohammad Shami who mesmerizes the batsmen with his bowling  
From Kiwi's side, Mitchel and Williamson put up some kind of  
resistance to the proceedings and steadied the drowning Kiwi  
ship. (Mitchel 139 and Williamson 69). But this was not  
enough and Kiwis lost the match by a margin of 70 runs.

India has entered the finals and shall face Aussies for they  
beat Protos by three wickets in the second semis to get a  
berth in the finals. The ICC Trophy is just a match away from  
the hot favourites – INDIA.