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Virat Lands The Knock Out Punch

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Virat Kohli makes scoring centuries look easy in ODIs. He has done it again and again in limited-

overs cricket for India and the first ODI against South Africa was no different. The Indian skipper scored his 33rd ODI, which came off 105 balls at the Kingsmead Stadium. Coming on to bat after India had lost Rohit Sharma, he joined Shikhar Dhawan in the middle but a mix-up between the two saw the end of Dhawan who had batted brilliantly till then.

An under pressure Kohli then played a well-paced innings and did not give any chance to the South Africa bowlers. As India moved towards the target, it was Kohli who kept his cool and rotated the strike with Ajinkya Rahane and scored the odd boundary in the over to keep the runs flowing. This was Kohli's 20th hundred in run-

chases for India and the team has won 17 matches while two have come on losses. This was the 18th time India won a game when Kohli has scored a century batting second. According to me, he is the greatest chaser ever in modern day cricket. However, things have become bad for Irfan Pathan, having being ignored at the IPL Auction. Many cricket pundits yet believes that an ample of cricket is still left in this all-rounder. But, the necessity is to maintain regular fitness and

performing consistently to leave an impression in the upcoming domestic seasons whether it is for Baroda or his current team J&K. The top priority at the moment is to get his spot back in the Indian team, then figure out his role and play according to the teams' requirement. An impressive performance at the domestics is the only key to unlock the door to return to the national side. Ishant Sharma is another cricketer, who is fighting for his survival. He is finding it difficult to



As India moved towards the target, it was Kohli who kept his cool.

cement his place in the team, particularly in the Test format where he always is in this on-off mode. The worst part is his position in the playing XI, which seems to have taken a hit after arrival of better performing bowlers. Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Umesh Yadav have given far more superior performances for India. Ishant Sharma will

have to stay focussed to win back his place. In the limited over formats, Ishant Sharma is not even in consideration. Ishant Sharma who has played for Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kings XI Punjab has not been picked by any franchise in this year's IPL Auction. This must have jolted his spirits badly. Actually, he seems to be content with what he is having as a bowler at the moment, a dangerous sign for any cricketer. There is more to read from cricket in this issue...

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WHAT'S HOT

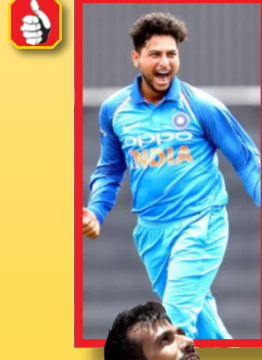
WHAT'S NOT



VIRAT KOHLI
He once again showed his majesty in the second ODI against South Africa, taking India over the finishing line along with Shikhar Dhawan.



AJINKYA RAHANE
He started from where he left in the Test series. The right hand batsman made batting looked easy in the first ODI of the series.



KULDEEP YADAV
Forming a web of unplayable deliveries, the Indian wrist spinner has made life hell for the rivals in South Africa in the ODIs.



YUZVENDRA CHahal
The man of the moment has fast tracked himself in the winning mentality, picking wickets every now and then. He was declared MOM in the second ODI.

HASHIM AMLA
The grand man of South African cricket has lost his Midas touch, finding hard to bat against the Indian bowlers.



QUINTON DE KOCK
He has been ruled out of the remaining ODIs and the upcoming T20 series against India. The wicket-keeper batsman was a failure in the first two matches.

MORNE MORKEL
He tried to bowl a nagging line and length but was taken head on by the Indian batsmen, hitting him for boundaries.



IMRAN TAHIR
He has a reputation of winning matches single handedly but the Indian batters have kept him away from his favorite job.



QUOTES



Umpires treating Indian batsmen like PSU Bank treat customers. Lunch ke baad aana
VIRENDER SEHWAG ON UMPIRES



They are going to be hard to beat, especially on home soil
MCGRATH ON ENGLAND'S CHANCES FOR WC



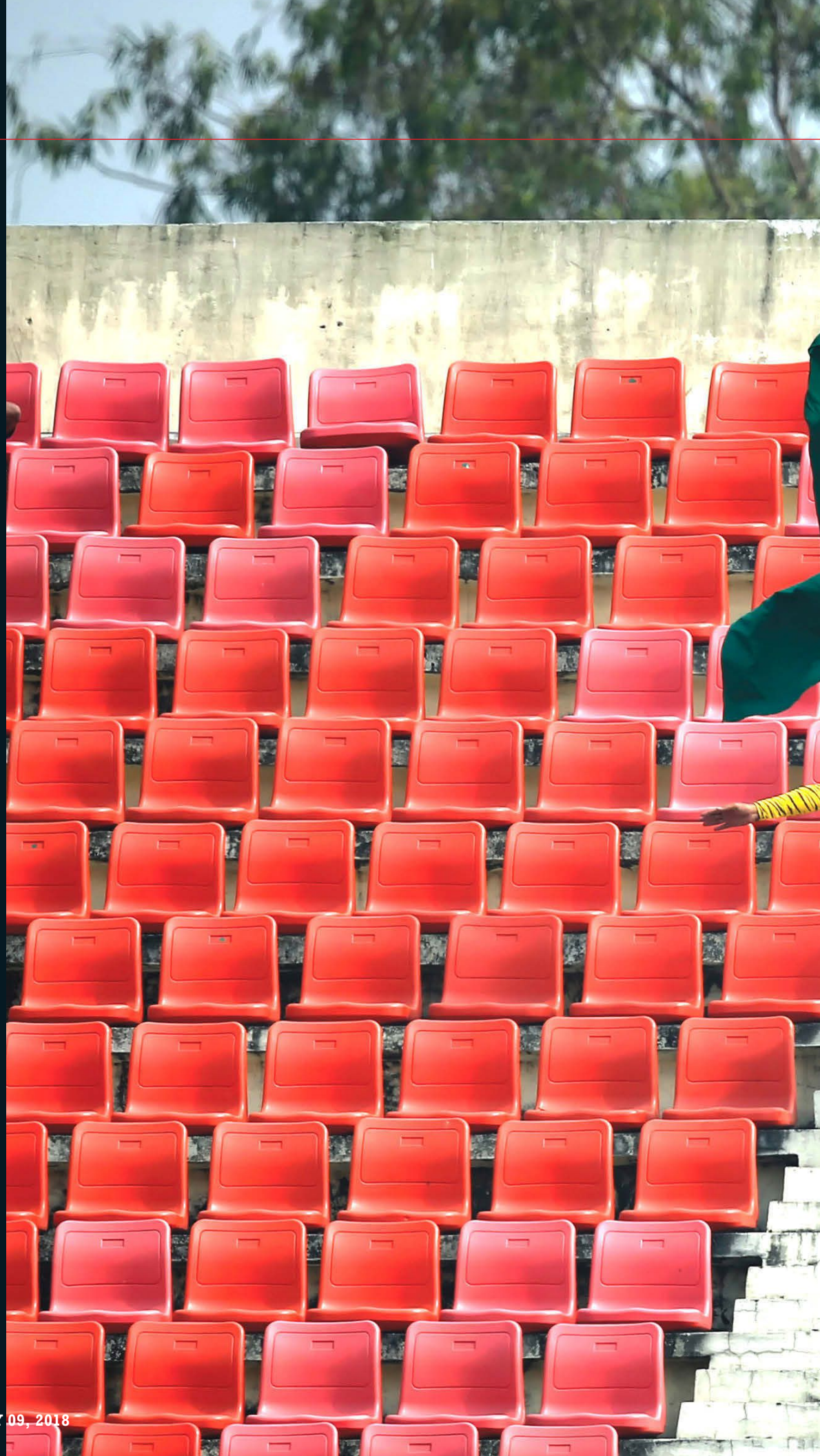
Kohli is a fantastic player but our team will make it "hard" (for him) to score a century in Pakistan
MICKEY ARTHUR ON VIRAT KOHLI



He is one of the most dependable performers in the Indian Cricket team
SACHIN ON BHUVNESHWAR

Painted Tiger

A Bangladeshi spectator painted his face and waves a National flag during the fifth and final day of the first test cricket match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Chittagong, Bangladesh. The first Test match of the series ended in a draw.







Run Machine

Skipper Virat Kohli produced another one of his trademark innings of brilliance while chasing to guide India to a comprehensive six-wicket victory over South Africa in the first cricket one-day. Kohli struck 112 off 119 balls, his 33rd ODI hundred.



POKER KING



He played his cricket with an open heart and now Shane Warne is following the same route in the world of Poker. The former Aussie star spinner, like his carefree life, is ruling the tables in this sport, winning comfortably. He likes to share news of his recent activities with fans, the same he has done once again after playing a game of Poker with professionals. Warne has shared a picture in which he is seen having fun while playing the game. He is doing well in commentary as well.

Maharani is depressed

Co-owner of Kings XI Punjab, Preity Zinta, had a remarkable turn of affairs, buying genuine match winners, R Ashwin and Chris Gayle to name few. However, she still regrets, having missed out on Sandeep Sharma after he was snapped by Sunrisers Hyderabad. Bollywood diva desperately wanted him in the team, a player she thinks can make a difference. "The one thing I am heartbroken about it is having to miss out on Sandy (Sandeep Sharma)," she said.





DANCING GIRLS

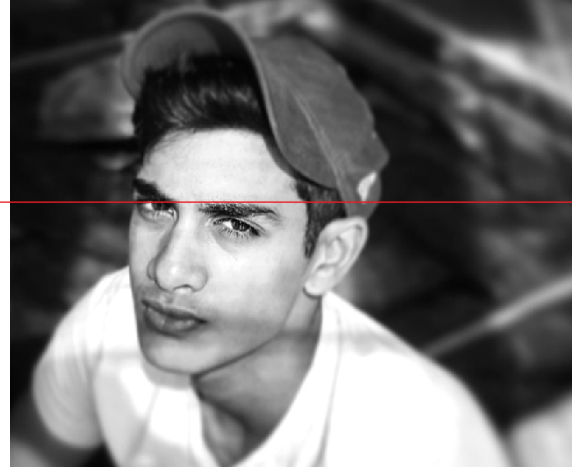
They are as cute as teddy bear and as talented as their father. David Warner's daughters have an unbelievable gift of picking up things. He has uploaded a picture of his two cute princess, making it worth watching. "Too cute this pic. First day of dancing for Indi Rae. There was no way she was missing out on this," he wrote. It seems the elder one Indi Rae has already decided her career path, taking dancing seriously, while her little sister is still gushing at what Indi is doing.



Kisses in filmy style

It was like a Bollywood movie when Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma took a pledged of spending their lives together. From Italy to India, the fever of their new innings had gripped the entire nation. Now, her beau is back to his best, scoring centuries after centuries in South Africa.

The lady luck of Virat Kohli sitting back in India is gushing over her husband's never stopping run flow. When Virat Kohli touched the 33rd ODI hundred mark, she celebrated it in style sending over love and kisses to the Indian skipper.



UNBELIEVABLE STORY

When the world was busy in watching millions being spend of cricketers at the IPL auction, they missed out on the real story. Aryaman Birla, the son of famous business tycoon Aditya Birla, too had his name at the mercy of franchise owners. Initially, he was rejected but coming later on, Royals decided to invest Rs. 30 Lakhs on him. He could have own any IPL franchise but he decided to fight his own battle away from the luxurious life style, which his father would have given him if he had asked for.



MEETING WITH JAGGU DA

We are in awe of Bollywood stars, who are trend setters. The 80's belong to Jackie Shroff if we talk about distinctive style. From the way he speaks to what he wears, Jackie is master at ruling hearts. Like a true and passionate fan, Irfan Pathan caught up with him during a flight. The Indian cricketer is himself a big star but like a common man, he was star stuck the moment he saw Jaggu Da in the flight. "Style hay bidu ;) fun loving guy Jaggu da," he wrote.

LUNCH DATE WITH PARTNER

Having been part of the ODI team, which was hammered by England in the ODI series, Steve Smith is trying best to get out of the hangover of the recent results. It was the best time to go out for a lunch date with your love and this is what he decided to vouch at, taking some time off from busy schedule – he has to otherwise, girlfriends can be real nasty if not listened to. They are looking adorable together in the picture uploaded by the Australian skipper.

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RAHANE SEALS SPOT



Virat Kohli, the skipper, has detailed out on what he is looking at for the upcoming fifty over World Cup in 2019. He has almost confirmed Ajinkya Rahane's position in the batting order, calling him a more suitable candidate for the No.4 slot in the swinging and challenging landscape of England. He will be in contention for the opening slot as well but Virat feels that Team India is in need of a batsman who can stabilize the ship down the order and this is where Rahane fits the bill.

NO SACHIN IN GREATEST XI

Former English captain has left Australia after playing in his last Big Bash League, calling curtains on this T20 tournament. Like other former players, he too, has come out with his greatest XI in Test, ODIs and T20 internationals. Sehwag of India, has managed to grab the spot across formats, indicating KP's taste for attacking cricket. The surprising package has come in form of Sachin Tendulkar -arguably the best ODI batsman ever- who has failed to make the cut in the ODI XI. He has managed to keep in place in the Test XI, though.



RECORD BREAKING AUCTION

It was one of the biggest events of 2018 and boy IPL Auction didn't disappoint any franchise as they got what they desired. The same can't be said about cricketers and their fanatics, who were left frustrated after being turned down or latter expressing irony seeing their favorite stars changing loyalty. Despite ups and down, the two-day affair was a mega hit on the social networking site, Twitter, attracting 770,000 tweets. The auction saw 335% increase in the numbers than the earlier year. Last year, the hashtag IPL 2018 Auction was discussed on Twitter as many as 230,000 times.

Rayudu gets the boot

Getting embroiled in a controversy in Ambati Rayudu's go to activity since he has started playing cricket. His behavior during Syed Mustaq Ali Trophy game against Karnataka finally led to his suspension for two games. Leading Hyderabad, he and his boys refused to leave the field after one dozy and questionable decision resulted in Hyderabad's defeat. Being captain of the team, he was found guilty of breaching the code of conduct.

PAKISTAN NEEDS DRAVID

With U-19 cricket team riding high and above in the World Cup, making their competitive task easy, Rahul Dravid has once again became the apple of many eyes, who are effusively praising the former Indian captain for inserting the winning zeal among players. Among the admirers, Ramiz Raja is not short of words while counting the benefits Indian players have with someone like Dravid as their guardian. "We need to give someone charge for a proper time period like India has done with Rahul Dravid," he said.





Prize money for champs

Boys in Blue defeated Australia comprehensively in the finale of the U19 World Cup, finishing their undefeated and invincible campaign on a memorable note. Rahul Dravid, the coach of the team, will get 50 Lakhs while the players have been allotted 30 Lakhs each. Support staff will be handed 20

Lakhs each for their assistance in bringing a formidable squad, capable of turning dreams into reality.

For records, this is fourth triumph for the sub-continent, going one trophy ahead of Australia, the second placed team. The most recent victory was so brutal that none of the opponents managed to survive the onslaught dish out by the boys from India. If defeating Australia was like a walk in the park then victory over Pakistan in the semis was a child's play for them.

DIG AT SEHWAG

Millions were shelled out in the recently concluded IPL auction with franchises going berserk after some names. Virat Kohli was particularly interested in retaining KL

Rahul, a player they had to leave at the mercy of other franchises, considering they didn't stop him from going into pool of players despite he was up for grabs. His plans were jolted by none other than Virender Sehwag. His loyalty to Kings was paid off in style when he successfully landed KL Rahul in side. Watching this from South Africa,



Virat was heard saying, 'Viru Paji' has gone mad.

WHEN GANGULY BECAME A SARDAR

Cricketers are treated like 'Gods' in India. Consequently, it is not easy for them to out as the love of fans, if recognized, can annoy them. They find ingenious ideas to hide their true identity while going out like a common man. Disguising fans has been their modus operandi. Sourav Ganguly has revealed that he once turned into Sardar to attend Durga Pooja. "I decided to go as one of Harbhajan's tribe. Yes, disguised as a Sardarji," said Ganguly. The former Indian captain is quite famous in Kolkata with millions following him. day and night.

To decode Kohli's success, the foremost reason for his infallible run is his adaptability. The man belongs to an era when the art of batting has evolved into its best form...



WHY WHY VIRAT KOHLI IS THE GREATEST CHASER EVER?



BY SHUBHAM GHOSH

Indian captain Virat Kohli hit his 33rd one-day international (ODI) hundred in Durban, February 1, against South Africa to give his side a 1-0 lead over the Proteas in the six-match series. It was a welcome win after the 1-2 loss in the Test series and India would be better placed in the ODI series following the six wicket win that came riding the broad bats of Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane (79).

But what is it that makes Kohli a boss in the limited versions – be it the ODIs and T20Is? Kohli is the only batsman in the world who averages above 50 in all three formats of the game. He also has the highest average while chasing in ODIs (over 65) which has made earned him points over even the great Sachin Tendulkar.

To decode Kohli's success, the foremost reason for his infallible run is his adaptability. The man belongs to an era when the art of batting has evolved into its best form, thanks to the quick transitions between formats. Kohli, like many other big batsmen of his generation like Steve Smith, Joe Root and Kane Williamson, have proved the fact that runs can be scored briskly even without slogging – in fact even with a straight bat.

Kohli belongs to the generation of batsmen who do not recognise the red line between conservative and flamboyant batting, something which had differed the Test batsmen from the ODI specialists a few decades ago. Kohli has no mental baggage to carry when he goes out to bat and this makes success more loyal to him.

The second reason is his mindset and approach, especially when batting second. Kohli paces his batting in a way that he is thriving for a goal like a professional does in his work life. To thrive for that, the 29-year-old gradually builds his innings by playing ones and twos with occasional boundaries.

This not just keeps him ticking and he gets closer to the target but also keeps the opponents unsettled. This is nevertheless easier said than done but Kohli's near-perfect fitness

Background: He gradually builds his innings by playing ones and twos.

Inset: Kohli's near perfect fitness enables him to carry on.





Above: Dhoni share the responsibility and eases the pressure off Kohli's shoulders.

Left: Kohli has no mental baggage to carry when he goes out to bat.

**“
India's coming of age as a unit has made their best batsman play smoothly in pressure situations.
”**

enables him to carry on with the same approach successfully in game after game. Hence, comes his consistency.

A third reason why Kohli is so successful in ODIs is that the team of his times features a number of players who have come up in the era when batsmanship has undergone a transition. The likes of Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Ajinkya Rahane, MS Dhoni, Hardik Pandya and others share the responsibility and eases the pressure off Kohli's shoulders, allowing him to play more freely. Tendulkar didn't have this liberty, especially in the earlier part of his career when the batting was over-dependent on him and till the likes of Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravids, Virender Sehwags and MS Dhoni arrived on the scene.

India's coming of age as a unit has made their best batsman play more smoothly, especially in pressure situations in the second innings. Kohli has already hit 20 hundreds batting second, 18 of them successfully. And he is already leading Tendulkar.

Many yet feel Kohli play against comparatively weaker bowling. Record book says 11 out of the top 12 batsmen having the best averages in ODIs made their debuts in the 2000s, the exception being Australia Michael Bevan. The reason, it is said, is the weakening of the bowling standards in world cricket. But one still can defend Kohli against such charges by pointing out at the rate with which he drives his team home.

Kohli's contemporaries too play the same weak bowling but it is he who consistently maintains his form, apart from the likes of Smith. This tenacity of doing well under all conditions (Kohli now has tons scored in all Test-playing nations except Pakistan and only the terrorists can deny him a 100 per cent record there) is another reason that makes Kohli successful in his game. ■

OPINION



SHOULDN'T PLAYERS FOLLOW PUJARA TO COUNTY CRICKET?

Pujara, who was unsold in the auction, will play for English county team Yorkshire which has signed him for a second stint...

BY SHUBHAM GHOSH

Background: Pujara's deal with Yorkshire had been inked many weeks ago.

While cricket audience in India and world remained glued to the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction in January end to witness the noise and razzmatazz of the summer cricket carnival in India, one player chose a reverse script and he is none other than Cheteshwar Pujara, India's rock-solid middle-order batsman. Pujara, who was unsold in the auction, will play for English county team Yorkshire which has signed him for a second stint. This will undoubtedly give Pujara the required practice ahead of India's big five-match Test series against England in



Left: It is surprising that cricket authorities in India do not allow the players to commit themselves for sides and games abroad.

Right: The super batsman in Virat Kohli himself has struggled in English conditions in the past.

Extreme right: County cricket stints help Indian cricketers to do well abroad.

Below: Apart from the likes of Pujara and Ravichandran Ashwin, not many big names of today are seen treading the path of county cricket.



August-September. There is even possibility of Pujara staying back in England after the Test series to play a couple of more games for the county side. It was reported, however, that although Pujara's deal with Yorkshire had been inked many weeks ago, it was deliberately revealed only after the IPL auction got over.

It is surprising that cricket authorities in India do not allow the players to commit themselves for sides and games abroad, even if it upgrades their skills ahead of a big series. India were routed in their last two Test series versus England (0-4 in 2011 & 1-3 in 2014) but yet there was no sign of big Indian names appearing for county sides to hone their skills ahead of the big series this year. The super batsman in Virat Kohli himself has struggled in English conditions in the past and was also heard of saying around end 2016 that he would like to play county cricket before the next trip to England. Nothing of that sort has happened yet, thanks to India's endless cricket commitments.

But that county cricket stints help Indian cricketers to do well abroad has been proved many a time in the past. The last time India succeeded in England was in 2007 when they





beat the hosts 1-0 in a three-match series and in that Indian team, as many as seven players had experience of county cricket. Again, in the Indian side that defeated Australia in Perth in 2008, seven players had their skills honed in English counties. Also in Durban in 2010, when India beat South Africa by 87 runs, they had seven players with county stints. So, there is a definite connection between county cricket and good performance abroad but the Indian cricket authorities have become so obsessed with the IPL that they have imposed a kind of protectionism, which is even at odds with the team's national commitments at times.

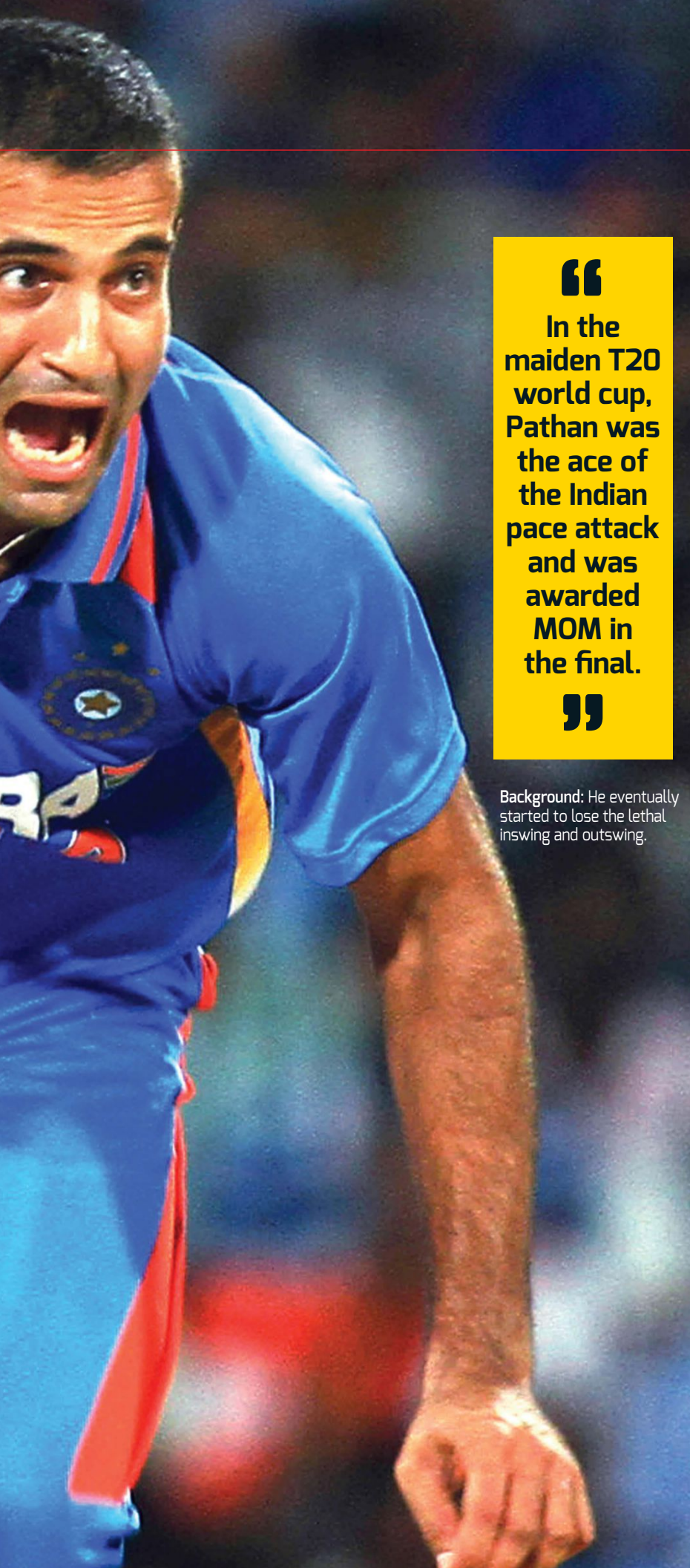
It is not only now that Indian players improved their skills at county cricket. The Gavaskars, Tendulkars, Ganguly, Dravids, Laxmans, Kumbles, Zaheer Khans and several other big names of Indian cricket have had their stints with county clubs and they had benefited from those visits. Even premier batsmen of other countries spend times at counties to test themselves in seaming conditions and playing the red ball. But the current generation of Indian players has found itself trapped by the IPL culture where exclusivity and money matter more than the game and its real interest.

Apart from the likes of Pujara and Ravichandran Ashwin, not many big names of today are seen treading the path of county cricket. They neither have the time nor the permission and that is not a healthy advertisement for Indian cricket.

Being the world's biggest and richest cricketing body, the BCCI needs to liberalize its thinking and allow Indian players mobilise themselves to the nook and corner of world cricket so that they help others and also benefit from others. By restricting the country's top cricketers, how are we helping the genuine cause of cricket? ■

On the zenith of his career people looked at him as the successor of the legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev and it raised hopes of ending the draught of perfect all-rounder...

IRFAN PATHAN A SUN SETTING DOWN IN INDIAN CRICKET



“
In the maiden T20 world cup, Pathan was the ace of the Indian pace attack and was awarded MOM in the final.
”

Background: He eventually started to lose the lethal inswing and outswing.

BY SHUBHAM DUBEY

29 January 2006 can this be penned down as one of the historic days in Indian cricket, look at that field, 9 men inside the ring, its all set for the final delivery, Yousuf the man on strike...bowled him, this is magnificent stuff! Another ripper, pitches in line and shapes back in, Yousuf was clueless, ball goes right through the gate and crushes into the woodwork, Pathan becomes only the second Indian bowler in the history of the game to bag a Hat-trick!—these kinds of innumerable emotions evoke in every cricket fan’s mind whenever there is talk of Irfan Pathan. This 22 year old bowling sensation from India had brought a revolution in the world cricket with his dangerous swing bowling. Accompanying the new ball with variation of swing and bounce, this young talent from Baroda had grabbed the attention of the globe at the start of twenty-first century. Providing the Initial breakthroughs and then playing a key role in the batting department had evolved him as a complete cricketer.

In the maiden T20 world cup, Pathan was the ace of the Indian pace attack and was awarded man of the match in the final for his staggering numbers of 3 for 16. He played a very crucial role in the memorable world T20 triumph of India in 2007.

On the zenith of his career people looked at him as the successor of the legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev and it raised hopes of ending the draught of perfect all-rounder in the Indian cricket. But this was the time when Greg Chappell who had taken over as the coach of the team in that period, boosted Pathan to be a batting all-rounder rather than the other way round and that was the time when Pathan was promoted up the order to improve his batting skills. Although he scored a few but eventually started to lose the lethal inswing, outswing and reverse that he possessed at the initial stage of his career. Now at that time when India have probably the best batting greats with the likes of Sachins, Dravids and Laxmans this decision of Chappell pushing Pathan frequently to bat at the top is the most criticize one. The legends like Laxman and Tendulkar even proclaimed that the time when Chappell was the coach was the worst in their cricketing period.

Now taking a quick look at what the numbers says; when Pathan started off he was able to swing the ball into right-handed batsmen at 140+ kmph. However, he was having trouble with the outswinger with same grip. So, Chappell suggested him to change the action to produce outswing for right hand batsmen and it kick start the miseries for Pathan. He took a brave call to remodel his action, but struggled to control the swing. He even dropped a bit of pace to regain control, but then opposition batsmen sorted him out easily. He has tried since then to regain pace while maintaining control on swing, but has failed. From here Pathan lost his



swing, for which he had glittered at the international level and ultimately lost his spot too from the Indian team.

In an eagerness to make a test comeback, Irfan pushed his body too hard and had to experience a steep decline in fitness which resulted in getting dropped from the other formats too. While he only has himself to blame, the talented seamer's career can also be viewed as yet another example of the Indian team

management's failure to take care of their own fast bowlers. This probably the reason why Pathan along with two other big names of Indian cricket was in the list of "India's lost boys" by Shashi Tharoor.

Another interesting stats shows that in IPL Pathan played 103 games under his belt while the thing to observe is the 98 of those games came before 2015 edition when he joined CSK. Pathan wasn't given a single match in Chennai colors which was led by MS Dhoni



Below: Irfan pushed his body too hard and had to experience a steep decline in fitness.

Right: Many cricket pundits yet believes that an ample of cricket is still left in this all-rounder.

Left: His continuous exclusion from Dhoni's XI had surprised many.



and in 2016 season too, the southpaw wore the RPS jersey in only four matches out of the 14 match that Pune had played . His continuous exclusion from Dhoni's XI had surprised many including the former Test opener Gavaskar. The legend believed that, Dhoni has not done justice in handling of a "world-class bowler" like Irfan Pathan and that was bewildering. Gavaskar also makes an inter-

esting observation on how Dhoni had chosen to under-use an all-rounder like Irfan Pathan. The former Test captain even sniffed of an "issue" between the two and says Dhoni's tactics have "raised eyebrows galore."

Nowadays, Pathan is at the 33rd step of his age, which originate questions that will he still make a comeback at the international level and once again play for India in the blues or is it the end of his pocket diary garnished with giant memories.

Many cricket pundits yet believes that an ample of cricket is still left in this all-rounder. But, the necessity is to maintain regular fitness and performing consistently to leave an impression in the upcoming domestic seasons whether it is for Baroda or his current team J&K. The top priority at the moment is to get his spot back in the Indian team, then figure out his role and play according to the teams' requirement. An impressive performance at the domestics is the only key to unlock the door to return to the national side. ■

Pakistan is currently the number one T20 side in the world. With the rating of 126, they are clearly ahead of the second spot Team New Zealand...



WHAT MAKES PAKISTAN A VERY GOOD T20 SIDE?

BY RAHUL SINGH

Pakistan cricket may not be as fiery team as it was once used to be, still they are a quality team with some good young and talented players. Although in terms of Tests and ODIs, the team has played below par cricket, however, they have still somehow managed to pull things off in shortest format of the game.

Pakistan is currently the number one T20 side in the world. With the rating of 126, they are clearly ahead of the second spot Team New Zealand who has the rating of 123. They have just won the three match T20 series

Above: The batting unit displayed better and improved performances from Fakhar Zaman.

Above right: Pakistan team played well and proved too much for the Blackcaps.

Below right: Batting was later backed by good bowling performances from Mohammad Amir.

against New Zealand and that too when they lost the ODI series 5-0 to the same opponent.

They have won all four T20I series in 2017-18 against West Indies, World XI, Sri Lanka and now New Zealand. The team that looks vulnerable in Tests and ODIs format suddenly looks impressive in T20 format.

COMPETITIVE UNIT

So, what makes Pakistan a competitive unit in T20 format? The answer lies in their fearless attitude when they play in this format, particularly with the batting. In the recent concluded T20 series against Blackcaps, it was expected that New Zealand will dominate the T20



format in the same fashion they did in ODIs. Still, the Pakistan team played well and proved too much for the Blackcaps.

Pakistan won the 3 match T20 series 2-1 and in both the matches that they won, the batting unit displayed better and improved performances from Fakhar Zaman, Ahmed Shehzad, Babar Azam and Sarfaraz Ahmed and which was later backed by good bowling performances from Mohammad Amir and Faheem Ashraf. Pakistan cricket may not be in dominating position as it once used to be, still they can take pride in their T20 triumphs and could use it as the building blocks to take Pakistan cricket back to its golden days. ■



Ishant Sharma's career was hammered by regular injuries, and ordinary performances have halted his bowling career...

Ishant Sharma Another star fading into oblivion





“

It was a promising start of a new career. However, further outings were not pleasant.

”

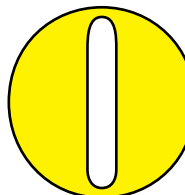
Above left: He started on a brilliant note but has faded into oblivion in the last few years.

Background: His position in the playing XI has taken a hit after arrival of better performing bowlers.

Above right: Striving hard for success and belting it out in the nets should be his sole aim.



BY RAHUL SINGH



In India's tour of Australia in 2008, which was scarred by bad umpiring decisions and controversies, was also the series when young Ishant Sharma came to reckoning. In the Perth Test, Ishant Sharma became a young sensation, all thanks to his fiery spell to Australian Captain Ricky Ponting. The young fast bowler from Delhi showed promise to be a great bowler. He was hailed by many players as new emerging star of India. Former Australian legend Steve Waugh even said that he sees Glenn McGrath in him. It was a promising start of a new career for Indian fast bowler. However, further outings were not as pleasant as it was hoped to be.

Ishant Sharma's career was hammered by regular injuries, and ordinary performances have halted his bowling career. He started on a brilliant note but has faded into oblivion in the last few years. Ouster from the team has further dented his confidence, failing to recover from the setbacks. He is finding it difficult to cement his place in the team, particularly in the Test format where he always is in this on-off mode. The worst part is his position in the playing XI, which seems to have taken a hit after arrival of better performing bowlers. Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Umesh Yadav have given far more superior performances for India. Ishant Sharma will have to stay focussed to win back his place. In the limited over formats, Ishant Sharma is not even in consideration. Ishant Sharma who has played for Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kings XI Punjab has not been picked by any franchise in this year's IPL Auction. This must have jolted his spirits badly. Actually, he seems to be content with what he is having as a bowler at the moment, a dangerous sign for any cricketer. Striving hard for success and belting it out in the nets should be his sole aim rather than getting content with one or two appearances for Team India in whites. ■

I HATE LIARS

— IQBAL ABDULLA

Name: Iqbal Abdulla, **Born:** December 2, 1989,
Place of Birth: Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh,
Playing Role: Allrounder, **Batting Style:** Left-hand
bat, **Bowling Style:** Slow left-arm orthodox

He is an Indian cricketer, who bowls orthodox spin and is a left-handed lower order batsmen. He plays for Kerala in the Ranji Trophy. A regular performer on the Mumbai club circuit, Abdulla came into the limelight when he ran through Haryana's batting line-up with a five-for in a Twenty20 game. He is a talented lower middle order batsman and an authentic fielder. Iqbal Abdulla went unsold during recently held IPL Auction in Bangalore.

First Love
My Family

Which sport you are rubbish at?
Rugby

One bad habit
Nothing as such

Favorite Food
Home Cooked food

Batsman tough to bowl
Yusuf Pathan

Favorite Cricket Ground
DY Patil Stadium, Mumbai

Favorite Gadget
My Mobile

Car you own
BMW

Best friend in cricket
All my teammates

Favorite Cricketer
Zaheer Khan

You are frightened of?
Defeat

Favorite Umpire
Simon Taufel

Favorite Destination
New York

Dream Car
Ferrari 458 Spider Convertible

One thing you hate most
I hate liars



My Favourites

Favorite Outfit:
T-shirt & Jeans
Favorite Mobile: Apple iPhone
Favorite Actress:
Kareena Kapoor
Favorite Actor:
Salman Khan

Active Suspension, **Aerodynamic drag**,
Anti-Squat, **Apex**, Aspect Ratio, **Balance Shaft**, Ball
Joint, **Beam Axle**, Beltline, **Bevel Gears**, Brake Bias,
Bushing, Cam Profile, **Camber**, Compliance,
Compression Ratio, Constant-Velocity Joint,
Connecting Rod, de Dion Suspension, **Detonation**,
Dive, **Drag Coefficient**, Driveline, **Exhaust-Gas
Recirculation**, Engine Control System, **Exhaust
Manifold**, Exhaust Port, **Feedback**, Fuel-Air-Ratio
Control, **Final-Drive Ratio**, Fluid Coupling,
Four-Wheel Drift, Helical Gear, **Jounce...**



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N.D.A & N.A. Examination (II), 2018	06 June 2018
C.D.S. Examination (II), 2018	08 August 2018
AFCAT 01/2019	01 December 2018

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“I was pretty impressive with the way he handled things, having been left out of the one-day team in the back half of the summer”



RICKY PONTING

ON GLENN MAXWELL

STOKES IN ODI SQUAD

All-rounder Ben Stokes has been included in England's squad to play New Zealand in a one-day international series starting later this month, despite ongoing legal issues. New Zealand-born Stokes has been charged with affray over his involvement in a brawl outside a Bristol nightclub following a one-day international against the West Indies in September. In naming its 15-match squad for the five-match series, the England and Wales Cricket Board said Stokes' involvement was subject to court obligations and his travel arrangements have yet to be confirmed. He will play for Rajasthan Royals in the IPL.



DOUG BOLLINGER RETIRES

Former Australia fast bowler Doug Bollinger has announced his retirement from all cricket aged 36. Bollinger took exactly 50 wickets in 12 tests at an average of 25.9 and 62 wickets in 39 one-day internationals at 23.9. He also made nine Twenty20 appearances for Australia and played 124 first class matches for New South Wales. The burly left-armer claimed two five-wicket test hauls, against the West Indies and New Zealand, with a best return of 5-28. He played all of his tests in 2009 and 2010, losing his place after the second match against England in Adelaide during the 2010 Ashes Series. He continued to play first class cricket, taking 411 wickets, and played in the Big Bash Twenty20 season until this year.



GESTURE FLOORED DADA

Indian cricket needed a man to breathe zeal of freshness in it, and this is when a cricketer from West Bengal was asked to lead the side. Sourav Ganguly has played an exemplary role in defying the odds. When he played his last game in 2008, the then captain MS Dhoni went to him with a request to lead the side in the last phase of the day. He did acknowledge his gesture but turned it down. MS Dhoni shocked him for the second time when he came up with a same proposal. This time Dada accepted it as he didn't want to disappoint Mahi for the second time running. Sourav Ganguly has opened up about Dhoni's gesture in his soon to be published autobiography.

NUMBER GAME

Pandya's base price was Rs 40 lakh which means his valuation was 22 times of that money. Having played just one first-class game, Krunal Pandya is a T20 specialis...

BY RAHUL SINGH

The auction of the 2018 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) saw some surprising buys, to say the least. Of the Indian players, bowler Jaidev Unadkat (Rs 11.5 crore) and batsmen KL Rahul and Manish Pandey (Rs 11 crore each) were among the most expensive ones but there were also other fresh faces who bagged fat cheques in this auction, showing how important they are being considered by the franchises in their respective scheme of things.

IPL 2018 AUCTION 5 UNKNOWN INDIAN PLAYERS WHO MADE IT BIG



KRUNAL PANDYA (MUMBAI INDIANS)

The foremost among these uncapped players was Krunal Pandya. The 24-year-old from Vadodara and sibling of national player Hardik Pandya, who had played a key role in Mumbai Indians' wins in the semi-final and final last year (he was picked as the man of the match in the final) was kept by the Indians using the RTM card after the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) won the bid for him at a whopping Rs 8.8 crore. Pandya's base price was Rs 40 lakh which means his valuation was 22 times of that money. Having played just one first-class game, Krunal Pandya is a T20 specialist with a strike rate of 147.50 and 39 wickets in 48 games.

ISHAN KISHAN (MUMBAI INDIANS)

The former captain of India's U19 team which made the finals in the 2016 edition, the Jharkhand batsman proved to be another profitable uncapped player as he landed with the Mumbai Indians for Rs 6.2 crore (his base price was Rs 40 lakh). Kishan, 19, had a memorable run in his second IPL in 2017 with 277 runs at a strike rate of 134.47. He also finished as Jharkhand's leading scorer in the recently held Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, accumulating 273 runs at a phenomenal strike rate of 145.98. Kishan had earlier played for Gujarat Lions in the IPL. Overall, Kishan has played in 41 T20 games and has a strike rate of 124-plus.





**RAHUL TRIPATHI
(RAJASTHAN ROYALS)**

Rahul Tripathi, 26, is another uncapped player bought by the Royals for a whopping amount of Rs 3.4 crore. In his debut IPL in 2017, Tripathi made a good impact with the bat for Rising Pune Supergiants, scoring 391 runs in 14 games at a strike rate of 146.44. Kings

XI Punjab and the RCB also eyed the exciting talent but eventually it was the Royals who grabbed him. Tripathi's base price was Rs 20 lakh and the actual buying price was 17 times more. In a team which already has massive hitters like Ben Stokes and Steven Smith, the presence of Tripathi will make the Royals batting line-up look even stronger.



**KRISHNAPPA GOWTHAM
(RAJASTHAN ROYALS)**

Twenty-nine-year-old Krishnappa Gowtham was the most expensive uncapped player bought by the Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2018 after a fierce bidding with the RCB. Gowtham, a Bengaluru boy who has played for Karnataka in domestic cricket and Karnataka Premier League, is known for his hitting abilities and spinning skills. In the 27 T20s he has played so far after an impressive Ranji Trophy debut, Gowtham has scored at a strike rate of 159.79 and also bagged 20 wickets with the best figure of 4 for 19. Gowtham's base price was Rs 20 lakh and he was eventually bought at a price of Rs 6.20 crore – 31 times more.



**KAMLESH NAGARKOTI
(KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS)**

Kamlesh Nagarkoti was bought by the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for a whopping Rs 3.2 crore, thanks to the 18-year-old's sensational fast bowling in the ongoing U19 World Cup. Nagarkoti, who hails from Rajasthan, had a base price of Rs 20 lakh but he eventually was bought for a price 16 times more. A fan of Real Madrid and Ronaldo, Nagarkoti has an experience of just six List A games but his giant strides in the U19 World Cup have already made him a star.



Pearl Continental

PEARL CONTINENTAL IN LAHORE IS MY FAVORITE
— WASIM JAFFER

Favorite hotel in the world

Pearl Continental in Lahore is my favorite. The food is just mouthwatering.

USP of the hotel

First of all, I should say the food. Then a mall attached to the hotel, which makes it a happening place. Moreover this place is regularly visited by the rich and famous people of Pakistan.

Your last visit there and the occasion

I went with Team India to play a Test series against Pakistan in 2005.

Favorite destination in the world

London is my favorite because of its weather and shopping destinations.

What is that you like about this place?

Apart from shopping and weather, I like the variety of food available in London.

What do you like to do on holidays?

Spending time with my family and friends. I also like to travel, exploring new places in India.

Most memorable meal while travelling

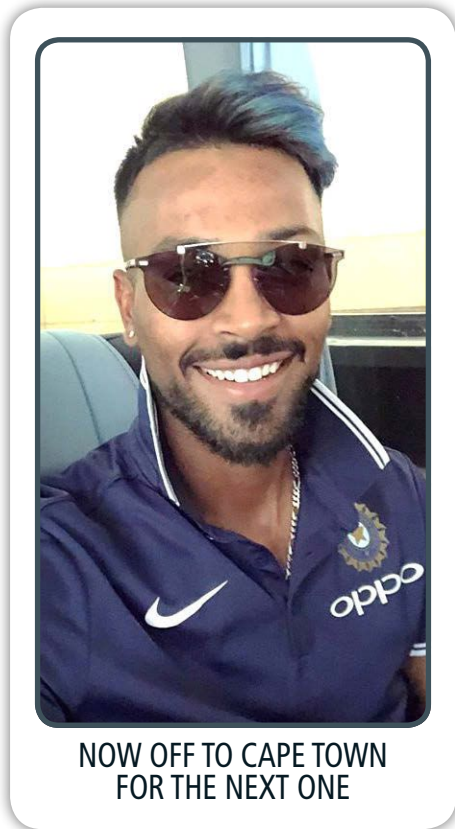
I had a delicious vegetarian food at the road side restaurant while traveling from Mumbai to Pune. The dishes were authentic, tasted like home cooked food.

What is the one thing you always pack before leaving for any destination?

I keep my cricketing gears at the first instance. ■



London

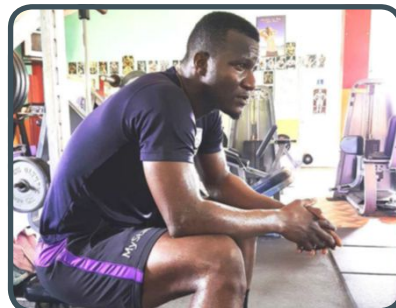


NOW OFF TO CAPE TOWN FOR THE NEXT ONE

insta



HAD GREAT OFF DAY WITH MY FAMILY



NO ONE SAID IT WAS EASY



ENJOYYYYYYY



All honor and all glory to you God
— Kuldeep Yadav



Where there is a will, there is a way
— Virender Sehwag



Young, Invincible, Champions — Hardik Pandya



With my brothers — Harbhajan Singh



twitter

@root66: "A couple of weeks at home and great to be back in my own bed"



@SDhawan25: "Chotey packet mein bada bomb@yuzi_chahal"



@iamShaniera: "Woke up in the beautiful City of Multan. So happy to be here"



@MichaelVaughan: "Cricket is bloody bonkers ... Lunch break taken with 2 runs required for Victory"



@ashwinravi99: "India has been amazing in both the ODI s and the wristies have been amazing"



CONTEST CORNER

Find six differences between these two pictures



Last month's winners: Ranu (Jodhpur), Tarang (Meerut), Ekta (Agra)



In this contest you have to spot six differences between both the pictures. Three lucky winners will get a Parker pen each.

Rules & Regulations for the contest

- **Last date for entries:** 15th February 2018.
- A draw will determine the winner.
- Winner's name will be announced in the next issue of cricket today.
- The prizes may vary from the one shown.
- Send in your answers along with your name, occupation, address, contact No. and Email ID at our postal address.

Our postal address

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BEST OF THE WEEK

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ROHIT SHARMA SMASHED 65 SIXES IN 2017



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THAT MOMENT



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THAT REACTION



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WHO WANT HIM TO RETIRE FROM T20 INTERNATIONALS



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