

Tilak Varma guides India to Asia Cup win over Pakistan

Kuldeep Yadav sets up India's third victory over their rivals in the tournament

AFP Dubai

Tilak Varma hit an unbeaten 69 as India defeated Pakistan by five wickets for a record-extending ninth Asia Cup title with no handshakes between the sides again on Sunday.

Chasing 147 for victory, India depended on Varma's 53-ball knock and a key 60-run stand with fellow left-hander Shivam Dube to reach their target with two balls to spare in Dubai.

Dube got out for 33 at the end of the 19th over and, with India needing 10 off the last six deliveries, Varma struck a six and Rinku Singh hit the winning boundary as the pair ran off to celebrate with their team.

Kuldeep Yadav set up India's third victory over their rivals in the regional tournament played under the T20 format as his figures of 4-30 helped bowl out Pakistan for 146.

India were in trouble at 3-20 and 4-77, but Varma kept calm to anchor the chase as he hit three fours and four sixes in his knock.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Sanju Samson's 24 and then a supporting knock by Dube took India home at a nearly packed stadium dominated by Indian fans.

The two neighbors came into the title clash with tensions high from their previous two clashes in the competition, which witnessed political posturing and aggressive on-field behavior.

India pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah raised the heat in the first innings on Sunday when he bowled Haris Rauf for six and made a gesture similar to the one the Pakistan bowler had done to the crowd in the previous meeting between the two teams.



The Asia Cup was widely seen as a dress rehearsal for the T20 World Cup to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka next year. AFP

Put in to bat after no handshakes at the toss, Pakistan started strongly as openers Sahibzada Farhan, who made 57, and Fakhar Zaman, who made 46, put on 84 runs but the team slipped from 113-1 to be bowled out in 19.1 overs.

Farhan fell after his second fifty in this edition of the Asia Cup after the batter attempted a second successive six off spinner Varun Chakravarthy.

Zaman took charge and along with Saim Ayub kept up the attack with regular boundaries

HIGHLIGHTS

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until Kuldeep struck in the 13th over.

Ayub fell to Kuldeep's left-arm wrist spin as Pakistan lost six wickets for 21 runs.

Zaman fell short of his fifty and Kuldeep struck with three wickets in the 17th over, including skipper Salman Agha for eight.

India and Pakistan met earlier in the competition for the first time after deadly fighting between the nuclear-armed neighbors, who have not played a bilateral series in over a decade.

The two only meet in multi-nation tournaments at neutral venues as part of a compromise deal.

In the group match, India skipper Suryakumar Yadav had refused to shake hands with Pakistan counterpart Agha and the two teams kept up the stance for the rest of the tournament.

The Asia Cup was widely seen as a dress rehearsal for the T20 World Cup to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka in February-March of next year.