

# India reach T20 World Cup final after England fail in epic chase

India defend massive total in dramatic semi-final to keep title defence alive

● **India beat England by seven runs**

● **Samson anchors big total**

● **Bethell scores brilliant 105**

AFP | Mumbai

India clung on to beat England by seven runs in a thrilling T20 World Cup semi-final in Mumbai yesterday, despite Jacob Bethell's superb 105 that put Harry Brook's side within a whisker of pulling off a record chase.

After Sanju Samson's scintillating 89 laid the platform for India to pile up a massive 253-7, England finished agonisingly short on 246-7 after a brilliant effort masterminded by Bethell.

Phil Salt (5), Brook (7) and Jos Buttler (25) fell early to leave England 64-3.

But Bethell, aided by partnerships of 77 with Will Jacks (35) and 50 with Sam Curran (18), kept England in the hunt.

The left-hander hit seven sixes and eight fours in his 48-ball thrash before his run out in the final over finally allowed India to celebrate in front of 35,000 jubilant fans in Mumbai's Wankhede



(L-R) India's Abhishek Sharma, Axar Patel, Sanju Samson and Rinku Singh celebrate after their team's win

stadium.

India will face New Zealand in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad as they attempt to become the first team to retain the trophy and the first to win it on home soil.

"It's an unbelievable feeling, going to Ahmedabad for the final, a special feeling for the

boys," said India captain Suryakumar Yadav, who paid tribute to England.

"They were always in the game, always in the chase. I was very nervous, I'm glad someone didn't check my heart rate," he said, before looking forward to the final.

"In India, going for the title,

there will be pressure, there will be nerves but the boys will be excited as well," Suryakumar added.

England captain Brook praised the way his side went about attacking a daunting target.

"All of our lads should be really proud of the way we played tonight and throughout this



**Brook's mid-off drop of Samson on 15 proved fatal—"catches win matches," he admitted—as the opener raced to fifty off 26 balls to set an imposing total**

competition," said Brook.

#### Costly drop

The hosts, having been asked to bat by Brook, earlier flayed England's attack to all parts of the ground, hitting 19 sixes and 18 fours.

Samson, who scored 97 not out in the previous match against the West Indies, signalled his intent with a four and six off Jofra Archer's first over.

But he was given a life on 15 when Brook dropped a simple chance at mid-off off Archer.

It proved a costly mistake as, helped by some ill-disciplined bowling, Samson raced to his half-century off 26 balls with a huge six as Liam Dawson's first

over was pummeled for 19 runs.

"I'll hold my hands up and say that I made a big mistake there, dropping Samson," said Brook.

"As the old saying goes, catches win matches. At the end of the day, it cost us."

Ishan Kishan put on 97 from 48 balls with Samson for the second wicket before the left-hander holed out to Jacks off Adil Rashid in the 10th over to make it 117-2.

Samson powered on until Jacks returned to have him caught by Salt in the deep in the 14th over at which point India were 160-3.

"It feels really great," said Samson after being named player of the match. "I kind of knew that I got some form going from the last game, so I thought I need to continue."

"Even 250 looked chaseable here and England played really well. All credit goes to how they batted and we really had a great semi-final."

Shivam Dube continued the onslaught with 43 off 25 balls with four sixes before being run out by Brook's direct hit.

Hardik Pandya hit 27 off 12 balls late on and Tilak Varma 21 off seven to take India past the 250 mark.

Jacks was the pick of the England bowlers with 2-40 but the wayward Archer was plundered, taking 1-61 off his four overs.

## Verstappen says new Red Bull car gave him 'goosebumps'



Max Verstappen steers his car during testing

AFP | Melbourne

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen said yesterday he does not know how the opening Grand Prix of the season will play out under sweeping new regulations, but he "got goosebumps" when he first saw the new Red Bull car.

The Dutchman was overwhelmed at pre-season testing in Bahrain by this year's rule changes, which have led to a complete overhaul of chassis and engines for every team.

Drivers will have to better manage their batteries on each lap, a task he called "anti-racing".

But with plenty of data collected he is optimistic ahead of the season-opening race in

Melbourne this weekend.

"It has felt like a long build up to this point and it is exciting to finally get out racing again," said Verstappen, who won six of the last nine Grands Prix in 2025 but narrowly failed to retain his world championship crown.

"In Bahrain, seeing the car with our own power unit getting in so many laps was very impressive."

"We've been driving the car in the simulator for such a long time, so when it was finally time to come back and see the car ready to go, I did get goosebumps."

Red Bull have dispensed with Honda engines and are competing this season for the first time with their own factory-built power units.

## Khalifa Bin Salman Cup Quarterfinals Get Underway

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

The quarterfinals get underway tonight at the Bahrain Basketball Association Arena in Um Al Hassam, with all matches played behind closed doors due to ongoing regional difficulties. The opening clash features holders Al Muharraq Club against Second Division side Sitra Club, with tip-off scheduled for 8:30 PM.

Muharraq enter the competition seeking a response after their exit from the FIBA West Asia Super League last month, while currently sitting atop the Zain Bahrain Basketball League. Assistant coach Jassim Mohammed described Sitra, who are second in League B, as "a talented side with promising young players" and stressed that Muharraq would approach the match "with full respect and focus." German head coach Peter Schomers will lead the reigning champions, while Sitra are guided by Ali Kawaid.

The Red Wolves will rely on firepower and leadership, with Mohammed Ameer Hamooda spearheading the attack, supported by Kris Clyburn and Nicholas West, while Bader



Bader Malabes trains ahead of Muharraq's Cup defense

Abdulla Malabes directs play alongside Mahmood Abbas and Mohammed Nasser. Muharraq's assistant coach also noted that, even with the stands empty, the

continued support of their fanbase remains a powerful source of motivation for the team.

Tonight's second quarterfinal at 10:30 PM pits fourth-placed

Al Ahli against fifth-placed Al Hala. Al Hala assistant coach Hussain Al Durazi confirmed the squad will be at full strength, including Ahmed Bindayneh and Abdulqader Salah, alongside professional recruits Shaeed and Treadwell. "Cup matches demand concentration and minimal errors," he said. Al Ahli, meanwhile, will rely on Hisham Sarhan, Maytham Jameel, and Mohammed Qurban, with Kadji and Anthony Fairley expected to make decisive contributions.

Saturday's quarterfinals continue at the same venue: second-placed Manama faces League B leaders Al Ittihad at 8:30 PM, followed by third-placed Al Najma against sixth-placed Al Nuwaidrat at 10:30 PM. All quarterfinals are single-elimination, with semi-finals set as a best-of-three series at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

Muharraq have lifted the Cup twice, while Al Ahli and Al Manama have claimed it three times each, and Riffa once. With several teams chasing history, the knockout rounds are now underway, giving each side a chance to make their mark in this season's Khalifa bin Salman Cup.