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AFP News

Mohammad Rizwan and captain Babar Azam starred as Pakistan stayed alive at the T20 World Cup with a seven-wicket win over Canada on Tuesday.

Knowing defeat would condemn them to a shock first round exit, Rizwan and Babar put on a match-winning second-wicket partnership of 63 as Pakistan reached their target of 107 with 15 balls to spare.

Opener Rizwan finished undefeated on 53 off 53 balls with two fours and a six for his 29th T20 international half-century while Babar made 33 off as many deliveries with one four and a six.

The victory came after 2009 champions Pakistan had lost both their first two Group A fixtures.

A stunning super-over humiliation at the hands of the United States was followed by a six-run loss to bitter rivals India in a game where they failed to chase down a modest 120-run target.

Tuesday’s win at the same Nassau County International Stadium where they came up short against India may still not be enough to secure a place in the second round Super Eights.

Pakistan have two points with one game left while India and the United States both have four points from two wins apiece and remain favourites to progress to the next stage.

“We needed this win,” said Babar, who explained that Pakistan

had been keen to reach their target within 14 overs to overhaul the USA's better run-rate.

"It was in our minds to win before 14 overs but the pitch made it difficult."

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir, who was named man of the match for his 2-13 off four overs, added: "That was a much-needed win to be honest. One more win and who knows?"

Despite the loss, Canada, with two points from three games, are still in the hunt for a Super Eights spot.

Dilon Heyliger took two of the Pakistan wickets to fall, dismissing recalled opener Saim Ayub for six and claiming the prized wicket of Babar, both men caught behind.

Earlier, Pakistan restricted Canada to 106-7 despite opener Aaron Johnson hitting his sixth international fifty.

Johnson demonstrated his attacking intent from the start, cracking successive boundaries off the first two balls he faced from Shaheen Shah Afridi.

– Johnson half-century –

The Jamaican born 33-year-old opener made 52 off 44 balls with four boundaries and four sixes before he was eventually out in the 14th over with the score on 73-6, clean-bowled by Naseem Shah.

Johnson was the only batsman in the top six to reach double figures as Pakistan's seamers took wickets on a regular basis.

"They kept picking up wickets but had we scored 130-plus we could have made a game out of it," said Canada skipper Saad Bin Zafar.

Amir clean-bowled Navneet Dhaliwal (four) with a 141 km/h delivery which sliced through the defences of the opener.

Shaheen recovered from conceding 10 runs off his first over to get rid of Pargat Singh (two) before Nicholas Kirton (one) was run out by a superb throw by Imad Wasim.

Haris Rauf sent back Shreyas Movva (two) – for his 100th wicket in the format – and Ravinderpal Singh (nought) in the space of three balls as Canada reached 55-5 after 10 overs.

Once Johnson was out, Canada struggled to press the accelerator and had added just 14 more runs off 20 balls when Saad (10) top-edged Amir to Rizwan behind the stumps.

Amir finished with 2-13 while Rauf claimed 2-26.