

Favourite India will be wary of Windies

The teams figure in their inaugural match of the World Test Championship campaign

INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

A perfect combination and a winning start will be foremost on skipper Virat Kohli's mind when India takes on the West Indies in its inaugural World Test Championship opener here on Thursday.

On paper, a batting lineup that has Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara, K.L. Rahul, Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant in the ranks should be termed clear favourite, but this West Indies team, led by Jason Holder, is no pushover.

England found that out the hard way at the start of the year when it lost a Test series 2-1 on some of the most lively pitches.

New ball challenge

Kohli and head coach Ravi Shastri, who recently got a fresh contract, will be wary of the challenge that can be posed by the new ball pair of Kemar Roach and Shannon Gabriel along with Jason Holder bowling his steady seam-up spells.

If there is pace and bounce, Kohli is likely to go with four specialist bowlers in which R. Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav will be fighting for the lone spinner's slot.

The three pacers, in all likelihood, will be Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami.

On the batting front, Kohli wants the opening combination of Mayank Agarwal and K.L. Rahul to make the most of their chances in the series.

"We have selected only two openers, so the idea is to give them four innings, just let them go out there and express themselves. Mayank has done really well, KL [Rahul] has performed well in the past, he is looking forward to making things count

New chapter

India and West Indies will have their first taste of the World Test Championship when they lock horns in a two-match series beginning in North Sound (Antigua) on Thursday. A look at how the teams have fared against each other over the years

INDIA VS WEST INDIES IN TESTS				
Matches	India	West Indies	Drawn	
96	20	30	46	

INDIA VS WEST INDIES IN WI				
Matches	India	West Indies	Drawn	
49	7	16	26	

ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

- Two-year duration in which 71 Tests will be played across 27 series
- The nine participating teams are Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa and West Indies
- The teams will play six series each — three at home and three away — with a series carrying a maximum of 120 points

- India has not lost a Test to the West Indies in this decade, winning 9 of the 14

THE SCHEDULE

Aug. 22 to 26, North Sound, Antigua

Aug. 30 to Sept. 3, Kingston, Jamaica

BATTING						INDIA						BOWLING					
Player	Inns	Runs	HS	Ave	50s/100s	Player	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Ave	SWI/10WIM	Player	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Ave	SWI/10WIM
Gavaskar	48	2749	236*	65.45	7/13	Kapil Dev	41	89	9/83	24.89	4/1						
Dravid	38	1978	146	63.80	13/5	Kumble	28	74	6/78	29.78	4/0						
Laxman	36	1715	176*	57.16	11/4	Venkataraghavan	37	68	5/95	39.47	1/0						
Tendulkar	32	1630	179	54.33	10/3	Chandrasekhar	24	65	7/157	33.52	4/1						
Vengsarkar	40	1596	159	44.33	7/6	Bedi	31	62	5/82	34.88	1/0						

BATTING						WEST INDIES						BOWLING					
Player	Inns	Runs	HS	Ave	50s/100s	Player	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Ave	SWI/10WIM	Player	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Ave	SWI/10WIM
Lloyd	44	2344	242*	58.60	12/7	Marshall	30	76	6/37	21.98	6/1						
Chanderpaul	44	2171	140	63.85	10/7	Roberts	25	67	7/64	21.70	4/1						
Richards	41	1927	192*	50.71	7/8	Hall	26	65	6/49	18.78	4/1						
Sobers	30	1920	198	83.47	7/8	Walsh	25	65	6/62	20.24	4/1						
Kanhai	28	1693	256	62.70	7/4	Gibbs	30	63	8/38	23.28	4/0						

in Test cricket again," Kohli said on the eve of the match.

"At the end of the day, as much as individuals want to perform, it is about what you can do as a team. If you look at the Melbourne Test, how [Hanuma] Vihari and Mayank opened and though

Vihari scored just 18 or 20 runs, he batted for 85 balls, tells you it is all about team, and he handled the situation so well that Pujara and myself could go out there and play the way we did and Pujara then went to get that century for us."

The teams (from):

India: Virat Kohli (Capt.), Mayank Aagrwal, K.L. Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Hanuma Vihari, Ajinkya Rahane, Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant (wk), Kuldeep Yadav, R. Ashwin, R. Jadeja, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and

Wriddhiman Saha (wk).

West Indies: Jason Holder (Capt.), Kraigg Brathwaite, Darren Bravo, Shamarh Brooks, John Campbell, Roston Chase, Rakheem Cornwall, Shane Dowrich, Shannon Gabriel, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Keemo Paul and Kemar Roach.

Match starts at 7 p.m. IST



Evenly matched: Vivian Richards, seen with Ravi Shastri, says both India and West Indies have the same kind of firepower and seam attack. •COURTESY BCCI

between India and West Indies when you were playing?

In the earlier days, there were a lot of folks who would be sorted out if not equipped. Nowadays, I think what makes the game easier as the umpire makes a signal on you that's one or two for the over (bouncers) and it is too predictable, in my opinion. Those days, it wasn't so. The players of today do have an advantage, especially if you are a batsman.

You always praise Virat. How much of yourself do you see in him?

I have a lot of respect for Virat. I see a lot of attitudes si-

milar, we are both so passionate about our leadership, we are passionate about how our fieldsmen behave, because he is driven and I have always felt that is why he is the captain. This guy leads from the front and I enjoy that and appreciate that. I made a statement once, where I had seen him on the long-on boundary in a match, and it was an appeal for a leg before; he is a long way from the square.

He is hands on. I have sometimes been accused of being hard on my players and the other day I saw him doing the same; I thought to myself "man... yeah I have done it too".

Physios and trainers interviewed

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Sixteen physiotherapists and 12 trainers were interviewed on Wednesday by the national selection panel for India's support staff.

Team India is set to have new appointees for these posts as Patrick Farhart and Shankar Basu decided to terminate their association as physiotherapist and strength and conditioning coach.

Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala, a sports medicine expert, and renowned fitness coach Ranadeep Moitra joined the M.S.K. Prasad-led selection committee at the BCCI headquarters.

The interview process will conclude on Thursday with 25 candidates set to be examined for the post of administrative manager.

Paytm retains title rights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Paytm has extended its association with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as title sponsor for international and domestic matches in India by agreeing to shell out ₹326.8 crore for the four-year cycle commencing October, 2019.

BCCI made the announcement after bid documents were opened at its headquarters on Wednesday.

Paytm had replaced Micromax with a bid of ₹2.42 crore per match in October 2015.

When the BCCI opened the bid documents for the next cycle – October 2019 to September 2023 – Paytm's parent company (One 97 Communications Pvt. Ltd.) walked away with the rights at ₹3.8 crore per match.

With India set to host at

least 86 international men's matches in bilateral series over the next four years, BCCI was thrilled with the 57 per cent hike in sponsorship amount.

"The BCCI are proud of Paytm continuing its longstanding commitment to Indian cricket," stated BCCI CEO Rahul Johri.

Vijay Shekhar Sharma, the founder and chief executive of Paytm, said, "We are excited to continue our long-term association with BCCI and the Indian cricket team. Our commitment to Indian cricket gets stronger with every season. India loves cricket and we at Paytm are the biggest fans of it."

While men's international cricket is the draw-card, BCCI offers extension of sponsorship rights to domestic cricket and women's international games at no additional cost.

THE ASHES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LEEDS

Australia coach Justin Langer has told his side to avoid being drawn into a bouncer battle after Steve Smith was ruled out of the third Test against England.

His absence from the third Test at Headingley, starting on Thursday, leaves Australia with a huge hole to fill.

Langer insisted that his side would not be side-tracked from its goal of becoming the first Australian team in 18 years to win an Ashes series in England.

"We know what our plans are to beat England," said Langer. "It's not an ego game."

Meanwhile, England opener Jason Roy passed a



Ready for action: Jason Roy, left, attends a nets session with Jack Leach and Jofra Archer. •AP

concussion test after being hit in the nets on Tuesday. The 29-year-old opener

was struck by a throw-down from ex-England international Marcus Trescothick,

working with the team in a temporary coaching capacity.

Sindhu and Saina make positive starts

BADMINTON WORLDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BASEL

Two-time silver medallist P.V. Sindhu produced a commanding performance in her opening match at the BWF World Championships here on Wednesday.

Sindhu looked in good touch as she controlled the rallies and outsmarted Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po 21-14, 21-14 in a 43-minute contest.

Eighth seed Saina Nehwal also made a positive start to her campaign, defeating Netherlands' Soraya De Visch Eijbergen 21-10, 21-11 to set up a clash with Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt.

Manu Attri and B. Sumneeth Reddy suffered a 16-21, 19-21 loss to sixth seeded Chinese Han Cheng Kai and Zhou Hao Dong in men's doubles while Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy crashed out after losing 20-22, 16-21 to seventh seeds Du



Deft touch: P.V. Sindhu controlled the rallies and outsmarted Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po in a 43-minute contest. •REUTERS

Yue and Li Yin Hui of China.

Jakkapudi Meghana and Poorvisha S. Ram went down 8-21, 18-21 to eighth seeds Shih Tanaka and Koharu Yonemoto of Japan in the women's doubles competition.

The results:

Second round: Women: P.V. Sindhu bt Pai Yu Po (Tpe) 21-14, 21-14; Saina Nehwal bt Soraya De Visch Eijbergen (Ned) 21-10, 21-11.

Doubles: Shih Tanaka & Koharu Yonemoto (Jpn) bt J. Megha-

na & Poorvisha S. Ram 21-8, 21-18; Yue Du & Yin Hui Li (Chn) bt Ashwini Ponnappa & Sikki N. Reddy 22-20, 21-16

Men: Doubles: Cheng Kai Han & Hao Dong Zhou (Chn) bt Manu Attri & Sumeet B. Reddy 21-16, 21-19.

PKL

S. PRASANNA VENKATESAN
CHENNAI

Jaipur Pink Panthers defeated Tamil Thalaivas 28-26 in the ProKabaddi League at the Nehru indoor stadium on Wednesday. Panthers led 13-11 at the break.

Ajay Thakur put out one of the only two defenders – Sunil Siddhgavali – for Thalaivas to get to 12-13 in the first minute of the second half. Deepak Hooda then secured a bonus point and put out V. Ajith Kumar for Panthers to lead 15-12.

T.R. Pavan and Hooda pulled off a super tackle on Ajay immediately after as Panthers made it 17-12.

Rahul Chaudhari sent out the only two defenders Pavan and Hooda in the fourth minute to help Thalaivas inflict an all out on Panthers and pull level at 17 from 13-17.

Ajay went past 650 PKL raid touch points.



Stepping up: Niles Salunke is on the prowl for Panthers. •M. VEDHAN

Earlier, Manjeet top-scored with seven points as Purneri Paltan beat Bengaluru Bulls 31-23. Rohit Kumar top-scored with seven points for Bulls. He also went past the 650-point milestone in the league. Bulls' Pawan Kumar Sehrawat registered 100 raid points for the season

and Manjeet got to 100 successful PKL raids as both teams were on equal points – 10-10 – at the break.

Remarkably, Paltan had secured six points and managed to keep Pawan off the mat for a total of eight minutes and 41 seconds.

In the second half, Man-

jeet did a super raid in the sixth minute to help Paltan inflict an all out on Bulls. Paltan led 19-11 then.

The results: Purneri Paltan 31 (Manjeet 7) bt Bengaluru Bulls 23 (Rohit Kumar 7); Jaipur Pink Panthers 28 (Niles Salunke 7) bt Tamil Thalaivas 26 (Ajay Thakur 6, Rahul Chaudhari 6).