

# Kohli's men look to overcome World Cup disappointment

West Indies, too, will hope for a change in fortunes when the three-match ODI series begins today; Gayle's presence a big boost for the hosts

## INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

With an air of invincibility, India returns to the format that gave it a heartbreak in the not-too-distant past, facing West Indies in the first of three-match ODI series here on Thursday.

Shikhar Dhawan makes a comeback in the format where he has been India's third best player after skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma.

Dhawan will take his place at the top of the order alongside Rohit and like the initial matches of the World Cup, K.L. Rahul is likely to go back to being the No. 4

With Kedar Jadhav expected to come in at No. 5 or 6 depending on how Rishabh Pant is used as a floater, it will be a toss up between Manish Pandey and Shreyas Iyer for the remaining middle-order slots.

With Bhuvneshwar Kumar playing three T20 Internationals he will probably get to cool his heels with Mohammed Shami leading the attack and Navdeep Saini making his ODI debut.

Kohli will fancy his team's chances in the series, notwithstanding the return of the swashbuckling Chris

Gayle. Rohit Sharma will look to continue his golden run with the bat in the 50-over format, having caressed his way to a record five centuries at the showpiece in the United Kingdom.

Kohli, who also enjoyed a great run in the mega event, will not be short on motivation despite the lack of world beaters in the opposition camp. The batting mainstay is also aware that a section of former players raised question mark around his captaincy in the limited overs format.

Thoroughly outplayed in the shortest format, West Indies will hope the return of the talismanic Gayle bolsters it.

### The squads (from):

**India:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kedar Jadhav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed and Navdeep Saini.

**West Indies:** Jason Holder (Capt.), Chris Gayle, John Campbell, Evin Lewis, Shai Hope, Shimron Hetmyer, Nicholas Pooran, Roston Chase, Fabian Allen, Carlos Brathwaite, Keemo Paul, Sheldon Cottrell, Oshane Thomas and Kemar Roach.

Match starts at 7 p.m. IST

STAT SPHERE						
As India gears up to take on the West Indies in a three-match ODI series, a look at how the teams stack up						
TOP RUN-GETTERS   INDIA						
	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg.	SR	50s/100s
Kohli	33	1,912	157*	70.81	96.27	10/7
Tendulkar	39	1,573	141*	52.43	78.02	11/4
Dravid	38	1,348	109*	42.12	74.39	8/3
Rohit	26	1,237	162	61.85	90.55	10/2
Ganguly	27	1,142	98	47.58	72.18	11/0
WEST INDIES						
	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg.	SR	50s/100s
Haynes	36	1357	152*	42.4	64.28	9/2
Chanderpaul	41	1319	149*	35.64	76.37	10/2
Sarwan	31	1296	115*	58.9	75.65	11/1
Hooper	42	1279	113*	44.1	84.75	8/1
Gayle	38	1247	140	32.81	88.88	5/4
TOP WICKET-TAKERS   INDIA						
	Inns	Wkts	BBi	Avg.	Eco	4W/5W
Kapil	42	43	4/54	28.88	3.62	1/0
Kumble	25	41	6/12	23.73	4.36	1/1
Jadeja	23	36	5/36	27.55	4.69	1/1
Harbhajan	30	33	3/32	34.27	4.26	0/0
Agarkar	21	32	3/24	24.5	4.49	0/0
WEST INDIES						
	Inns	Wkts	BBi	Avg.	Eco	4W/5W
Walsh	38	44	4/16	24.15	3.24	2/0
Hooper	45	36	4/37	39.55	4.65	1/0
Richards	22	36	6/41	21.97	4.63	1/1
Ambrose	25	32	4/36	22.46	3.23	1/0
Rampaul	14	28	5/51	23.78	5.62	3/1
■ Anil Kumble's 6-12 at the Eden Gardens in 1993 is the fifth best bowling figures by a bowler in an ODI against the West Indies						
■ Sir Viv Richards has the second-best bowling figures						
■ Carl Hooper is the only player to feature on both the highest run-scorers' and wicket-takers' lists						



Raring to go: Virat Kohli will not be short on motivation despite the lack of world beaters in the opposition camp. ■ AFP

## Third 'Test' on razor's edge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TAROUBA

West Indies-A was 163 for six in reply to India-A's 201 on the second day of the third and final 'Test' here on Wednesday.

The host's hopes rest on opener Jeremy Solozano who was unbeaten on 57. Sunil Ambris contributed 43.

Umesh (two for 29 off 16 overs) bowled an economical spell, picking up the wickets of Akim Frazer and Brandon King to reduce West Indies-A to 36 for three.

### Gowtham scalps three

Solozano and Ambris joined hands for a 66-run partnership for the fourth wicket before the latter fell to Shivam Dube. Off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham took three for 56 as the Indian bowlers struck back.

In the India-A innings, skipper Hanuma Vihari (55 off 139 balls) and wicket-keeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha (62 off 66 balls) added 86 for the fifth wicket after the visitors were in a spot of bother at 48 for four.

Chemar Holder (three for 47) and Frazer (three for 53) were the pick of the bowlers for West Indies-A.

**The scores:** India-A 201 (Mayank Agarwal 33, Hanuma Vihari 55, Wriddhiman Saha 62, Chemar Holder three for 47, Akim Frazer three for 53) vs West Indies-A 163 for six (Jeremy Solozano 57 batting, Sunil Ambris 43, Krishnappa Gowtham three for 56).

## PCB not to renew Arthur's contract

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KARACHI

Pakistan's cricket board axed coach Mickey Arthur on Wednesday after the team failed to get out of its group in a disappointing World Cup.

Arthur's contract expired after the World Cup and he had asked for a two-year extension.

But Pakistan Cricket Board chief Ehsan Mani said Arthur and his assistant coaches Grant Flower and Azhar Mahmood had all been shown the door.

Reports say Arthur has been shortlisted as the next England coach after Trevor Bayliss departs following the ongoing Ashes Test series.

# Australia's Ashes sweep a possibility, says McGrath

'Smith hits the ball into unconventional areas; his ways at the crease are very effective'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Glenn McGrath sees a potential 5-0 sweep for Australia in the ongoing Ashes series following its remarkable comeback from behind victory over England in the first Test at Edgbaston.

The Aussie pace bowling legend is back here at the MRF Pace Foundation where he will soon be joined by the emerging players of the Australian Academy team.

He said "5-0 is a possibility. It will not be easy for England who are without the injured James Anderson, such a big factor in the English conditions with the Duke ball."

And then he dwelt on Steve Smith whose battling twin hundreds in the first Test buried England. "The English crowd was after him but he showed enormous mental strength."

### 'Technique is for the purists'

Talking about Smith's methods, McGrath said, "Technique is for the purists. Smith's ways at the crease are very effective."

McGrath added, "Smith moves across and you think you can get him leg-before



Glenn McGrath, seen with M. Senthilnathan and Basil Thampi, is back at the MRF Pace Foundation in Chennai. ■ K. PICHUMANI

but he gets the better of you. He hits the ball into unconventional areas. You bowl outside off and he can hit you behind square on the leg-side. He uses the pace on the ball."

The Aussie pace predator said, "Smith is not like Mark Waugh or Damien Martyn who were natural, fluent strokemakers. To me he is somewhere between Steve and Mark Waugh."

Still on Smith, McGrath said, "Smith is not ruffled by

the dot balls. Smith and Cheteshwar Pujara are two present-day batsmen who have loads of patience."

**Smith and Kohli the best** McGrath said, "Smith averages close to 63 after 65 Tests. If he maintains this average after 100 Tests, he will be among the greatest batsmen to have played the game. Right now, Smith and Virat Kohli are the two best batsmen in the world."

McGrath was excited with

the comeback of the pacey James Pattinson and said, "He is the enforcer in this Australian attack. He's got the pace, skill and presence."

He called his former teammate and now Aussie coach Justin Langer a tough bloke and said, "He emphasises discipline and commitment, has produced results with whichever team he has coached."

The pace ace sympathised with New Zealand's debatable defeat in the World Cup

## McGrath bats for Shastri

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

"If it ain't broke don't fix it," Glenn McGrath appears to be suggesting.

On the issue of India either continuing with Ravi Shastri or picking a new coach, the Aussie pace legend said to *The Hindu*, "The Indian team has been performing well under Kohli and Shastri. They get along well. Only this year India won its first ever Test series in Australia."

McGrath continued, "If somebody asks me, I would say 'why change?'."

But eventually it is for the BCCI and the panel it has appointed to decide.

"It's about what they want from the coach, the captain and the team."

Queried about India's failure to win the World Cup, McGrath said, "I thought India played well in the competition. It lost narrowly to New Zealand in the semifinal."

"The odd defeat can happen to any team."

McGrath's views are in tune with the emerging indications that Shastri is likely to keep his job.

final and said, "We should have had another Super Over or a Bowl Out. I think the boundaries countback rule was framed by a batsman!"

Asked about Rohit Sharma's lack of consistency in Tests, McGrath replied, "He has the ability. I am surprised why he has not been able to seal his Test place so far. He has the technique and the strokes."

McGrath called Dale

Steyn, who recently retired from Tests, "One of the greatest fast bowlers of all time with an outstanding strike-rate."

On Mohammad Amir leaving Test cricket at 27 to play in the shorter formats, McGrath said, "That's a young age to leave Tests. I still hope there enough people who regard Test cricket as the primary form of the game."

# Thakur ties it for Thalaivas

His buzzer raid helps the side finish level with Yoddha



Slipping away: Ajay Thakur provided the final touch for Thalaivas. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

## PKL

SPORTS BUREAU  
PATNA

U.P. Yoddha was involved in its second tie of the season after a thrilling end to its match against Tamil Thalaivas.

The seesaw battle between the two ended in a 28-28 stalemate at the Patlipu-

tra Indoor Stadium here on Wednesday.

Ajay 'Iceman' Thakur lived up to his name, scoring in the crucial buzzer raid to help Thalaivas share the honours.

The contest began with Thalaivas getting on the scoreboard first, but Yoddha didn't wait too long for its opening point too. It was 3-3 after the first five minutes

before Yoddha's defence held firm and the team went into the break with a 16-11 advantage.

Successive super tackles opened up a 23-17 lead for Yoddha before the spirited Thalaivas fought back to finish level.

**The results:** U.P. Yoddha tied with Tamil Thalaivas 28-28.

Patna Pirates 26 lost to Haryana Steelers 35.

# Challengers power past Paltan, enter semifinal

Amalraj the star for the Goa side; Archana stuns Winter

## UTT

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

Goa Challengers got its campaign back on track, knocking out last-placed Puneri Paltan 11-4 and sealing a semifinal berth in the Ultimate Table Tennis league here on Wednesday.

Paltan needed to win by at least a seven-point margin to catch up with Goa at 34 points and advance on the basis of the head-to-head result of this encounter. But Goa, determined to make amends for its shock 11-4 loss to U Mumba, proved too hot to handle.

It was Archana Kamath who stunned Sabine Winter 2-1 to provide the finishing touches.

### Desai drubbed

The hero of Goa's big win was A. Amalraj who handed out a 3-0 drubbing to the recently-crowned Commonwealth champion Harmeet Desai and gave his team the winning lead.



In the thick of it: Amalraj was in his element, winning both matches. ■ COURTESY UTT

After World No. 9 Cheng I-Ching expectedly blanked the 122nd-ranked Ayhika Mukherjee, the reigning Commonwealth champion, 3-0 to give Goa a flying start, Alvaro Robles' 2-1 loss to the fancied Chaung Ching-Yuan kept Paltan alive.

What followed was the 'Amalraj show'. Along with Cheng, Amalraj consolidated Goa's lead by beating another

India-Chinese Taipei pair of Ayhika Mukherjee and Chuang Chih-Yuan 2-1. But the former National champion was not done yet.

Amalraj, easily the quickest player on the Indian circuit, produced several close-to-the-table whipped returns on both flanks to keep the crowd enthralled. Even after winning the first two games comfortably, he did not offer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BECKENHAM (UK)

The India under-19 team was dismissed for 244 against Bangladesh under-19 in the tri-series match here on Wednesday. The latter was 19 for two in reply when a downpour ended the contest.

Opting to bat, skipper Shubhang Hegde top-scored with 69 off 97 balls while Sameer Rizvi made 44 off 32 deliveries, the duo reviving the innings after a top-order collapse.

At one stage, the Indians were reduced to 65 for four with openers Priyesh Patel (8) and Tilak Varma (1), No. 3 Pragnesh Kanpillewar (21) and No. 4 Shashwat Rawat (9) back in the pavilion.

After Shubhang and Sameer, Divyansh Saxena (37) and Karan Lal (25) made crucial contributions, sharing a 73-run stand for the seventh wicket to take India-A to 244.

Shoriful Islam, Avishek Das and Shamim Hossain took three wickets apiece.

**The scores:** India under-19 244 in 49.3 overs (Shubhang Hegde 69, Sameer Rizvi 44, Divyansh Saxena 37, Karan Lal 25) vs Bangladesh under-19 19 for two. No Result.

■ Paltan needed to win by at least a seven-point margin to catch up with Goa at 34 points and advance

■ Goa, determined to make amends for its shock 11-4 loss to U Mumba, proved too hot to handle

Desai a consolation game, bouncing back from 8-10 to win the 'golden point'.

In the final singles, Archana played way above her World ranking of 139 to upstage the 58th-ranked Sabine 2-1. Indeed, with Goa assured of a big win, the young Indian played without pressure while it was difficult for Sabine to keep herself motivated.

**The results: Goa Challengers bt Puneri Paltan 11-4** (Cheng I-Ching bt Ayhika Mukherjee 11-8, 11-1, 11-5; Alvaro Robles lost to Chuang Chih-Yuan 9-11, 11-10, 5-11; A. Amalraj & I-Ching bt Chih-Yuan & Ayhika 11-7, 9-11, 11-7; Amalraj bt Harmeet Desai 11-7, 11-7, 11-10; Archana Kamath bt Sabine Winter 8-11, 11-6, 11-9).

**Thursday's fixture:** Chennai Lions v Dabang Delhi (7 p.m.).