

# India's chance to settle scores with SA

The home team's bowling and the visitor's batting will look to cash in on each other's inexperience

## SA IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO  
MOHALI

If there is a change of mindset in India's approach to T20 cricket, it could well come across in Wednesday's clash against South Africa.

For long, India has found it tough to justify its rather conventional approach to batting in the first 10-12 overs, keeping wickets intact before going for broke at the back-end.

Since Virat Kohli categorically stated that the batting depth is being considered in any combination, it obviously allows the top-order to play with more freedom.

### Change in approach?

The other day at Dharamshala, Kohli emphasised, "If all teams across the world are batting till No. 9, 10, why can't we?" That, in effect, compels the specialist bowlers to spend more time at the 'nets' with the bat in their hands!

At the same time, it could help the international T20 careers of Ravindra Jadeja and Krunal Pandya, who have better batting credentials than Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal.

Given the inexperience of this visiting team when it comes to playing on Indian pitches, the spinners could prove a handful, especially the variety offered by leggie Rahul Chahar.

With this assumption, In-



**Strong point:** Kohli's men will bank on their batting might to surmount South Africa's challenge. ■ AKHILESH KUMAR

dia has the luxury of going in with six bowling options, including three spinners.

Pacers Khaleel Ahmed, Navdeep Saini and Hardik Pandya, along with spinners Krunal or Jadeja, Washington Sundar and Rahul enhance India's wicket-taking abilities.

In fact, South Africa's wicketkeeper-captain Quinton de Kock should know Rahul's worth since they turn up for Mumbai Indians.

In the batting department, Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhanu, Kohli, Shreyas Iyer and

Rishabh Pant appear a certainty, with Hardik to follow. What adds to the interest is South Africa's preparedness to test the Indian batting might. In the squad of 14, South Africa has nine bowling options!

Much like India, South Africa is likely to go in with five specialist batsmen, three all-rounders and the specialist bowlers.

Looking at the top-order, India will look to cash in on the collective inexperience of Reeza Hendricks, Temba Bavuma and Rassie van der

Dussen. Similarly, the Proteas batsmen will hope to take advantage of the lack of experience in the Indian bowling ranks.

With the sun shining brightly, action is sure to begin in what is effectively a two-match series.

In 2015, when South Africa last played a three-match T20 series, one game was rained off and India lost the other two.

Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri, with one eye on statistics, will be eager to return the favour this time around.

**The teams (from): India:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, Krunal Pandya, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Deepak Chahar, Rahul Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed and Navdeep Saini.

**South Africa:** Quinton de Kock (Capt.), Rassie van der Dussen, Temba Bavuma, Reeza Hendricks, David Miller, George Linde, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Junior Dala, Bjorn Fortuin, Beuran Hendricks, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada and Tabraiz Shamsi.

Match starts at 7 p.m.

# Team wants fearless, not careless cricket: Rathour

Captaincy is a new stepping stone in my career: de Kock

RAKESH RAO  
MOHALI

It doesn't require a brilliant cricketing brain to separate 'fearless' from 'careless' when batting. But some youngsters of the present Indian team need the difference to be spelt out.

On Tuesday, India's newly appointed batting coach Vikram Rathour put it in as many words. "All the young players need to understand that there is a fine line between fearless cricket and careless cricket."

"What the team management is asking from them is fearless cricket, having clear a gameplan and playing with intent. At the same time, you can't be careless."

### Phenomenal player

Rishabh Pant is the obvious reference point. And the articulate Rathour, also a former National selector, was categorical.

"As far as Rishabh is concerned, he is a phenomenal player. He just needs to sort out his gameplan, needs to bring in a little bit of discipline into his game."

"We want him to play all his shots. That is what makes him special. He is an impact player, but at the same time you can't be careless."

Talking about the present combination, in the background of skipper Virat Kohli's emphasis on the team



Vikram Rathour. ■ AKHILESH KUMAR



Quinton de Kock. ■ AKHILESH KUMAR

**We want him [Pant] to play all his shots. That is what makes him special. He is an impact player, but at the same time you can't be careless.**

—VIKRAM RATHOUR

**Leading into the World Cup, to lose a game in different conditions, is not ideal, but that's what it is. It is a bit negative.**

—DE KOCK

batting deep, Rathour said, "We are fortunate to have so many all-rounders in this team."

"In the past, we did not take T20s seriously but now we are preparing for the T20 World Cup. By batting deep, we can go harder in the beginning and we will be trying out different things in this series and see what works for us."

### Not ideal

South Africa skipper Quinton de Kock regretted the rained out match in Dharam-

shala. "We would like to have played three games against India."

"Leading into the World Cup, to lose a game in different conditions, is not ideal, but that's what it is. It is a bit negative."

When asked about how he was looking to his role as a captain in this series, the opener and wicketkeeper said, "Not too concerned, to be honest. It is a new stepping stone in my career, gives me extra responsibility. Not sure if it would affect me negatively or positively."

# Gill and Karun in cruise mode

Shepherd India-A to 233 for three on the opening day

## SA-A IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL  
MYSURU

Fluent knocks from Shubman Gill (92, 137b, 12x4, 1x6) and Karun Nair (78 batting, 167b, 10x4) took India-A to 233 for three on the first day of its second 'Test' against South Africa-A at the SDNR Wadiyar Stadium here on Tuesday.

The duo came together with India-A in a spot of bother at 31 for two, and put on 135 to steer their side to safety.

They patiently played out the opening bowlers Vernon Philander and Lungi Ngidi, both of whom extracted movement in the morning session. When the sun came out and the pitch dried up, Gill and Karun opened out.

Gill, who has been included in the Test squad to face South Africa, was in fine touch. He was particularly strong off the front foot, driving the fast bowlers straight down the ground with aplomb.

One stroke off Philander stood out for its audacity – the youngster simply flicking his wrist to dispatch an over-pitched delivery from outside off to the long-on fence.

He was on course to reach a fifth First Class century, un-



**On the go:** Shubman Gill belted 12 boundaries and a six but was unlucky to miss out on a century by eight runs. ■ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

til a half-hearted cut went straight to gully.

### Excited

Gill earned a reprieve on zero when he edged Philander between third slip and gully. Gill, who made 90 in the previous match, is looking forward to joining the Test side. "I'm very excited. Being picked for the Test team is a big deal for every cricketer," he said.

Karun, meanwhile, built on the great form he showed in the Duleep Trophy. He was aggressive after lunch, hitting speedster Lutho Si-

pamla for three boundaries in an over. When the spinners Dane Piedt and Senuran Muthusamy came on, Karun disrupted their rhythm by using the sweep shot regularly.

Wriddhiman Saha who, like Gill, is part of the Test squad, gave Karun company and remained unbeaten on 36.

Abhimanyu Easwaran (5) and Priyank Panchal (6) failed to get going.

While Abhimanyu received a questionable leg-before decision, Priyank nicked an outswinger from

fast bowler Wiaan Mulder to first slip.

### The scores:

**India-A – 1st innings:** Abhimanyu Easwaran lbw b Ngidi 5, Shubman Gill c Muthusamy b Sipamla 92, Priyank Panchal c de Bruyn b Mulder 6, Karun Nair (batting) 78, Wriddhiman Saha (batting) 36; Extras (nb-2, b-8, lb-6): 16; Total (for three wickets in 74 overs): 233.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-10, 2-31, 3-166.

**South Africa-A bowling:** Philander 12-2-21-0, Ngidi 13-1-41-1, Mulder 13-7-19-1, Sipamla 15-2-54-1, Piedt 11-0-45-0, Muthusamy 10-0-39-0.

**Toss:** South Africa-A.

# 'Want to keep the rhythm going'

Ngidi says he has done a lot to recover from injury

ASHWIN ACHAL  
MYSURU

Midway through South Africa's stuttering ICC ODI World Cup campaign, fast bowler Lungi Ngidi was ruled out due to a hamstring injury. He could only watch from the sidelines as his side struggled in the mega event, finishing with just three wins in nine matches.

The strapping pacer is now back in action, turning out for the touring South Africa-A here. In the first 'Test' against India-A – his first competitive match since the injury lay-off – Ngidi bowled well to pick up five wickets.

The 23-year-old is keen to get into the groove before he joins the senior Test team to take on India.

"The hamstring injury was causing maybe because I was trying to bowl too fast. Missing the latter half of the World Cup was disappointing, but injuries are a part of life."

### Feeling fit

I went straight to my recovery routine, and now I'm feeling very fit. I've done a lot of training to recover from the injury. I'm happy with the way I'm bowling, and I want to keep the rhythm going," Ngidi said here on Tuesday.

Ngidi can count on fellow



**Lettin' it rip!** South African pacer Ngidi could be a handful for the Indian batsmen in the Test series. ■ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

South African speedster Dale Steyn for support and inspiration. "Steyn has the perfect blue print for a fast bowler. Taking 400 Test wickets is something all of us aspire to achieve. He has been very influential, he gives us a lot of good advice. Having him around is great for the team," he said.

A year ago, Ngidi suffered a personal tragedy when his father Jerome passed away.

"My father was my biggest supporter; that spot has been taken by my mum now."

### Dad is watching

"His demise was unfortunate and sudden. He wanted to see me play for South Africa and in the IPL – I'm happy that he got to see both. Life, death... it happens. I know he's watching me from above, so I want to make him proud," Ngidi said.

# KPL players report suspicious approaches

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

It is not the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) alone that has come under the scanner of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU).

The ACU has received 'tip-offs' about players being approached by unidentified people in other T20 leagues as well, including the Karnataka Premier League (KPL).

Top officials at the ACU confirmed to *The Hindu* that quite a few players in the KPL this season reported suspicious approaches. Players have sent the ACU screenshots of WhatsApp conversations, where unknown people – posing as fans – sought information about matches and team combinations.

"Some of the players involved in the KPL have reported instances where unknown people tried to be friendly with them via WhatsApp. We have taken note of their complaints and are looking into the matter," BCCI's ACU chief Ajit Singh said.

### Keeping a close tab

While he did not reveal further details, it is learnt from highly reliable sources that the ACU is keeping a close tab on a few players – who have also played at the international level.

There were allegations of malpractices in the KPL last year too, and the ACU had probed a few people. However, the investigation is still believed to be ongoing.

Ajit agreed that the bookies usually take such an approach while trying to influence players.

"However, it is a positive sign that the players are coming forward and reporting any suspicious activities. We are looking into all the aspects," he said.



Ajit Singh. ■ COURTESY: BCCI

# Dinesh Mongia calls it a day

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
NEW DELHI

Former India all-rounder Dinesh Mongia, member of the Indian team which finished runner-up in the 2003 World Cup, announced his retirement from all forms of game on Tuesday. Mongia's final appearance came in 2007 for Punjab before he joined the Indian Cricket League (ICL) and was subsequently banned by the BCCI.

The punishment for playing the ICL left Mongia without any official connection with the game and he was lost to cricket. Most players banned by the Board for their association with the ICL were granted amnesty but Mongia remained the lone cricketer who was kept out of the official circuit.

"Those were hard days," recalled Mongia who took up coaching assignments to stay in touch with the game. Last season, he was made a State

selector by the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA).

It was considered "amnesty" by Mongia, who wants to take up coaching assignments now.

From his under-19 debut for Punjab in October 1995, Mongia made rapid progress to earn a First Class debut in February 1996.

Six years of consistent scoring pushed him into the Indian team for a debut against Australia in 2001 at Pune. He figured in 57 ODIs but never played a Test.

He played in 121 First Class matches and hit 21 centuries.

Mongia also turned out for Lancashire and Leicestershire.



**End of the innings:** Mongia's final appearance came in 2007 for Punjab before he joined the ICL and was subsequently banned by the BCCI. ■ P. V. SIVAKUMAR

# Kaushik and Sanjeet score upset wins

Panghal, Kavinder also make the quarterfinals to seal a wonderful day for India

## WORLD BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
EKATERINBURG (RUSSIA)

The Indian juggernaut rolled on as four pugilists, including Asian champion Amit Panghal (52kg), advanced to the quarterfinals with impressive victories in the World men's boxing championships here on Tuesday.

Asian Games gold-medallist and second seed Panghal was joined by Asian silver-winner and fifth seed Kavinder Singh Bisht (57kg) and the debutant duo of Commonwealth Games silver-winner Manish Kaushik (63kg) and Sanjeet (91kg).

Panghal defeated Turkey's Batuhan Citfci, while Kaushik stunned fourth-seeded Mongolian Chinzorig Baatarsukh, who is an Asian

Games silver-medallist and also a two-time medal-winner at the Asian Championships. Both the Indians claimed 5-0 victories.



**Proving his mettle:** Panghal compensated for the height disparity by tackling Citfci with aplomb. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sanjeet (91kg) then caused another massive upset by defeating second-seeded Uzbek Sanjar Tursunov 4-1. Tursunov is a bronze-medal-

list from the previous World Championship besides being an Asian silver-winner.

In the evening session, Bisht defeated Finland's Arslan Khataev 3-2 to claim a second successive quarterfinal spot at the marquee tournament.

### For the Prime Minister

Panghal, who is chasing a medal in his second World Championship after a quarterfinal finish in 2017, dedicated his win to the Prime Minister.

"It was a good bout as I fought against an experienced boxer. I will be ready with my strategy for Paalam tomorrow."

"I dedicate this win to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is celebrating his 69th birthday today," Panghal said after the bout.