

# India will look to continue its WTC march

South African bowlers will have to rise to the occasion if the team has to stay afloat in the series

## SA IN INDIA

**AMOL KARHADKAR**  
PUNE

The last time – in fact the first time – the scenic stadium on the outskirts of the city hosted a Test match, Steve O’Keefe made the most of an *akhada* (dust bowl) to roll over India’s famed batting line-up to lead Australia to a rare win on Indian soil. The match got over in barely two and half days, with India’s batsmen returning to the dressing room quicker than the zooming cars on the adjoining Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

The meek surrender at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium may have taken place a little over two and a half years ago, but with the impressive run India has had in white flannels across the globe since then, the defeat has turned into a distant memory for a majority of cricket connoisseurs.



**On a roll:** Virat Kohli will be keen to make his 50th Test at the helm a memorable one.

• VIVEK BENDRE

**Milestone match**

However, captain Virat Kohli – who will lead India in his 50th Test when he walks out for the toss for the second game of the series against South Africa on Thursday – will look to nail a series-clinching win in the milestone match.

That loss against Australia in February 2017 remains India’s only defeat at home un-

der Kohli.

But with India looking solid as ever on home turf, the Proteas will have to literally play out of their skin – and hope for the skies to remain clear – to end Kohli and Co’s 10-match unbeaten streak at home.

South Africa displayed a lot of character – “resi-

lience,” as referred to by captain Faf du Plessis – in the first innings, recovering after a top-order collapse to put on 400-plus on the board. But Mohammed Shami’s sensational spell on the first morning virtually took all the positives away despite Senuran Muthusamy and Dane Piedt delaying the

inevitable.

**Damp pitch**

The South African bowlers would have learnt their lessons from the show of their Indian counterparts in Visakhapatnam. With a damp pitch and overcast skies, the visiting team’s bowlers will expect to make early inroads

and give the team a chance to draw parity in the series.

However, despite an undercooked strip, primarily due to incessant rain in the lead-up to the game, Kohli’s cavaliers will be confident of continuing their clean slate in the World Test Championship (WTC).

India is unlikely to tinker with its settled combination. South Africa, on the other hand, will be tempted to bolster its pace department with either Lungi Ngidi or Anrich Nortje coming in for Piedt or Vernon Philander.

Irrespective of the team compositions, with a thunderstorm threat looming over the city for the rest of the week, both camps – and the fans – will be hoping that weather doesn’t emerge the man-of-the-match.

**The teams (from):**

**India:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Kuldeep Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk) and Shubman Gill.

**South Africa:** Faf du Plessis (Capt.), Aiden Markram, Dean Elgar, Theunis de Bruyn, Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock (wk), Vernon Philander, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Dale Piedt, Anrich Nortje and Senuran Muthusamy.

*Match starts at 9.30 a.m.*

# Double points for away wins: Kohli

du Plessis calls the system ‘complicated’

**AMOL KARHADKAR**  
PUNE

If cricket is far from being a simple sport for a tyro, the World Test Championship is even more complicated to fathom even for an ardent sports lover.

As the debate over the fairness of the points system heats up as the WTC is settling in, India captain Virat Kohli has said that he would prefer an additional incentive for winning a Test overseas.

“If you would have asked me to make the points table, I would give double the points for an away-Test win. That is something I would definitely like to see, maybe after the first edition,” Kohli said on Wednesday.



**Magical change:** Rohit Sharma, who made a dream start as a Test opener, gets ready for more.

• VIVEK BENDRE

**Great for Test cricket**

“Look, the importance of every game has become that much more. In situations, in a three-match series, you probably would have played out a draw, but teams are going to go for wins and get those extra points, so, I think it’s great for Test cricket.”

With India topping the WTC table in its early stages, Kohli stated that the competition has made cricketers more intense.

“The matches are going to be that much more exciting is what we all feel and have already experienced.

“We have to be profes-

sional in every session that we play. It will be much more demanding on the players now, which is a good thing, as it will keep the standard of Test cricket high,” he said.

While India has maintained a clean slate in its three Tests of the WTC so far – two in the West Indies followed by the first of the Freedom Series in Visakhapatnam – South Africa had its first brush with the new tournament last week.

Terming the points system as “complicated”, captain Faf du Plessis said that not losing points at home will be critical for the teams to feature in the final, sche-

duled for mid-2021.

“It is complicated. Obviously, shorter the Test series, the more points you get. You get 120 points for two wins and then you play a five-match series, then you’ve to win 5-0 which is a lot harder than winning 2-0,” du Plessis said.

**Holes and flaws**

“But I’ve noticed with these things, you’ll always find holes and flaws. It’s never a perfect system. So for us, it’s just about being the first who is going through this journey now with the Test championship. I think home games are going to be really important.”

# A mean machine with a heart

## EXCLUSIVE

**S. DINAKAR**  
CHENNAI

“When I feel good, I can do anything,” declared Kagiso Rabada. He meant what he said.

As an explosive fast bowler with power and skill, who can crash past defences or knock down batsmen with brutal lifters, the South African has walked the talk.

Among the hottest fast men around – the 24-year-old Rabada has 177 wickets in 38 Tests at 22.35 – the leader of the South African pace pack in the post-Dale Steyn era is a bonafide game-changer.

Talking exclusively to *The Hindu* in Visakhapatnam about the responsibility of leading the Proteas’ attack, Rabada said, “It is a good pressure. I am always challenging myself, getting out of my comfort zone. You got to make play for the team.”

Irrespective of the conditions or the situation, the magnificently athletic Rabada, with his bounding run-up and exemplary wrist and seam position, has this habit of whipping up unplayable deliveries out of nowhere.

He said, “You are so intense that the magic just comes and produces itself because of the situation. Your competitive nature manifests itself.”

Rabada is also an emotional fast bowler, doesn’t mind a glare at the batsmen with his



**Lethal:** Rabada has the ability to bowl unplayable deliveries.

• K.R. DEEPAK

big expressive eyes or a few words.

He explained, “It’s about who’s going to come out on top when up against the best. International cricket is never easy. You put a lot of hard work in a session, an investment, and there can be emotional outbursts or expressions of joy.”

On his mantra for wickets, Rabada said, “looking at the pitch and the conditions, working on the technique of the batsman, and being patient.” Growing up, Rabada had his heroes. “Steyn, he bowled fast but had the skill to take wickets anywhere. Anderson, Lee, McGrath, Ntini, the list is endless.”

On the dry Indian conditions and on abrasive pitches, reverse swing was the main weapon, he felt. “And I can get the ball to reverse. You need pace, skill and accuracy.”

With Steyn retired, the expectations from Rabada and his pace partners have increased. “I like to hang out with Vernon Philander and Lungi Ngidi. We bounce ideas off each other. We need to step up.”

Ask him about the finest contemporary batsmen and fast bowlers and his response is quick. “Virat Kohli, Steve Smith and Kane Williamson. Then, Pat Cummins, Jofra Archer and Jasprit Bumrah.”

Rabada is conscious about the workload factor. “Now you have bio-mechanics and gym work. You got to be strong so that your body can hold together.”

On being a cricketing role model for the black Africans in his country, Rabada said, “It is for a good cause. It’s just the reality of our country.”

Rabada is a mean machine with a heart.

# Priya and Jemimah steer India to a facile win

South Africans fail to come to terms with the host’s slow bowlers

## SA WOMEN IN INDIA

**ASHWIN ACHAL**  
VADODARA

India cruised to an eight-wicket win over a shoddy South Africa in the first One-Day International at the Reliance Cricket Ground here on Wednesday.

Faced with a small target of 165, India rode on fine knocks from ODI debutante Priya Punia (75 n.o, 124b, 8x4) and Jemimah Rodrigues (55, 65b, 7x4) to get the job done with 50 deliveries to spare.

The openers got the home side on the right track with a solid 83-run stand. Jemimah was adventurous with her strokeplay, while Priya was happy to block.

Jemimah could have got a big score, but her across the line heave to Nondumiso Shangase cut her exciting essay short. Priya started nervously, before opening up with a few crisp drives. It was a day to remember for 23-year-old Priya, who took India past the finish line in the company of seasoned captain Mithali Raj (11 n.o.).

“I received a call from my father this morning. He told me to take my time and stick around at the crease. His advice worked quite well,” Priya said. The happy occasion could have been ruined had Marizanne Kapp held on to a simple catch offered by Priya, batting on 6.

**Two decades and counting**

The 36-year-old Mithali, incidentally, has now completed 20 years in international cricket. Her maiden appearance came in an ODI against Ireland back in June 1999.

After opting to bat, South Africa struggled to get going. Pacers Jhulan Goswami (three for 33) and Shikha Pandey (two for 38) got among the wickets, while the spin trio of Ekta Bisht, Deepti Sharma and Poonam Yadav kept things tight.

The batters were all at sea against the generous flight offered by the slow bowlers. The visitors did not get to the pitch of the ball, and ended up playing airy shots well away from the body.

**Paying the price**

The experienced Trisha Chetty (14, 17b) attempted to slog left-armer Ekta out of the park, but ended up stumped. Ekta then deceived Mignon du Preez (16, 16b) in the air, dragging her out to offer a second stumping to wicket-keeper Taniya Bhatia. Laura Wolvaardt (39, 62b) fell to off-spinner Deepti Sharma, who got one to go through bat and pad.

Trisha, Mignon and Laura paid the price for committing to the front foot much too early and without good



**What a start!** It was memorable debut for Priya Punia as the youngster put in a player-of-the-match performance on Wednesday.

• VIJAY SONEJI

## SCOREBOARD

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Lizelle Lee lbw b Jhulan 0 (1b), Laura Wolvaardt b Deepti 39 (62b, 5x4), Trisha Chetty st Taniya b Ekta 14 (17b, 2x4), Mignon du Preez st. Taniya b Ekta 16 (16b, 4x4), Sune Luus c&b Shikha 22 (43b, 3x4), Marizanne Kapp c Punam b Jhulan 54 (64b, 6x4), Nadine de Klerk lbw b Shikha 0 (2b), Shabnim Ismail c Taniya b Poonam 3 (2b), Nondumiso Shangase c Jemimah b Jhulan 4 (10b, 1x4), Tumi Spindile c Ekta b Poonam 6 (34b), Ayabonga Khaka (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (w-4, lb-1): 5; Total (in 45.1 overs): 164.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-0 (Lizelle, 0.1 ov), 2-32 (Trisha, 7.3), 3-56 (Mignon, 11.5), 4-89 (Laura, 21.4), 5-103 (Sune, 24.4), 6-103 (Nadine, 24.6), 7-115 (Shabnim, 29.6), 8-128 (Nondumiso, 32.6), 9-158 (Tumi, 44.3).

**INDIA BOWLING**

Jhulan 71-0-33-3, Shikha 10-0-38-2, Ekta 8-0-28-2, Deepti 10-0-31-1, Poonam 10-1-33-2.

**INDIA**

Priya Punia (not out) 75 (124b, 8x4), Jemimah Rodrigues lbw b Nondumiso 55 (65b, 7x4), Punam Raut lbw b Nadine 16 (38b, 3x4), Mithali Raj (not out) 11 (24b, 1x4), Extras (nb-1, w-6, lb-1): 8; Total (for two wkts. in 41.4 overs): 165.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-83 (Jemimah, 20.4), 2-128 (Punam, 31.6).

**SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING**

Shabnim 4-1-14-0, Marizanne 5-0-19-0, Ayabonga 6-0-19-0, Tumi 7-2-22-0, Sune Luus 4-0-22-0, Nadine 7-4-1-29-1, Nondumiso 8-0-39-1.

**Toss:** South Africa.

**Player-of-the-match:** Priya Punia.

*India won by eight wickets with 50 deliveries to spare.*

## IN BRIEF

**Fernando powers Lanka to 3-0 series win**

**LAHORE**

Sri Lanka defeated Pakistan by 13 runs to win the third and final T20I on Wednesday, routing the No. 1 team 3-0 in the series. The visitors scored 147 for seven with debutant Oshada Fernando scoring an unbeaten 78 off 48. Pakistan was undone by leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (3/21). **The scores:** Sri Lanka 147-7 in 20 overs (Oshada Fernando 78 n.o., Mohammad Amir 3-27) bt Pakistan 134-6 in 20 overs (Haris Sohail 52, Wanindu Hasaranga 3-21).

**Warriors beat Thalaivas; Titans defeat Yoddha**

**GREATER NOIDA**

Bengal Warriors produced a clinical performance to beat Tamil Thalaivas 33-29 in their ProKabaddi League (PKL) match here on Wednesday. In the other match, Telugu Titans beat UP Yoddha 41-36. **The results:** Bengal Warriors bt Tamil Thalaivas 33-29; Telugu Titans bt UP Yoddha 41-36.

# CoA debars three associations from AGM

**G. VISWANATH**  
PUNE

The Committee of Administrators (CoA) has communicated to the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA), Haryana Cricket Association (HCA) and Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) that their Constitution is not in terms with the BCCI Constitution approved by the Supreme Court and hence they will not be allowed to take part in the BCCI AGM/Election to be held in Mumbai on October 23.

It is mandatory upon full members to be compliant with the BCCI constitution registered with the Tamil Nadu Registrar of Societies.

The CoA had pointed out inconsistencies in the constitution of the three full members of the BCCI and asked them to make amend-

ments to be in tune with the BCCI’s.

The TNCA has been quite vocal in articulating that the CoA has not been given the authority by the Supreme Court to disqualify the BCCI members because they are non-compliant. Haryana and MCA feel the same.

It’s not known if the CoA has explained the constitution-related circumstances to the *Amicus Curiae* P.S. Narasimha and of its decision.

The TNCA has nominated R.S. Ramaswamy, Haryana Mrinal Ojha and Maharashtra Riyaz Bagban to take part in the BCCI AGM/Election. All three are likely to approach the Supreme Court on this matter.

The valid electoral list for the BCCI AGM will be announced on Thursday (October 10) evening.

# TNCA looking at legal options

**S. DIPAK RAGAV**  
CHENNAI

The TNCA secretary R.S. Ramaswamy said, “We got the mail today (Wednesday) about the decision and will consult with our legal team before sending a response by tomorrow. If the electoral officer accepts the CoA’s recommendation to stop us from the participating in the elections, we have no option but to move the Supreme Court on it. We firmly believe the CoA doesn’t have the authority to stop an association from the AGM and elections.”

The issue with TNCA’s constitution is down to having two vice-presidents and having a nine-year cap only for office-bearer’s post and not for members of the apex council. TNCA had also made changes to its constitution in reducing its apex council to less than 19.

# Zverev beats dizziness and Chardy

## SHANGHAI MASTERS

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
SHANGHAI

Novak Djokovic said on Wednesday that he was “embracing” the pressure of being World No. 1 and reigning champion at the Shanghai Masters this week.

The 32-year-old eased past young Canadian Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 6-3 with minimum fuss.

The 16-time Grand Slam champion said he had no pain from the shoulder injury that forced him out of the US Open last 16.

Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated 19-year-old Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6(3), 7-6(3) for his first victory over the Canadian stretching all the way back to their junior days.

Alexander Zverev had a bout of dizziness during an incident-packed victory over French underdog Jeremy Chardy, 7-6(13), 7-6(3).

Zverev apologised to a television cameraman after he accidentally hit a ball square into his jaw in winning a point. Zverev was also seen by a doctor in the first set and in another colourful moment he smashed his racquet on the floor during the mammoth first-set tie break.

The second-set tie break had a lighter moment – Zverev losing his grip while hitting a shot, his racquet flying into the crowd.

**The results: Second round:** No-



**Interesting:** Alexander Zverev beat French underdog Jeremy Chardy in an incident-packed match.

• AFP

vak Djokovic bt Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 6-3; John Isner bt Lucas Pouille 7-5, 6-3; Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6(3), 7-6(3); Karen Khachanov bt Taylor Fritz 6-2, 6-4.

Roberto Bautista bt Reilly Opelka 6-4, 7-5; Matteo Berrettini bt Christian Garin 6-3, 6-3; Alexander Zverev bt Jeremy Chardy 7-6(13), 7-6(3).

Andrey Rublev bt John Millman 6-2, 6-0; David Goffin bt Mikhail Kukushkin 6-2, 3-0 retired; Dominic Thiem bt Pablo Carreno-Busta 7-6(3), 6-3.

reason. Only Marizanne showed the skill required to stay alive, playing the ball late and under her nose.

It was Jhulan who started the fire, trapping Lizelle Lee leg-before with a sharp inswinger in the very first ball

# Sameer, Lakshya and Rahul advance

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
ALMERE (THE NETHERLANDS)

Top seed Sameer Verma, Lakshya Sen and B.M. Rahul Bharadwaj progressed to the pre-quarterfinals of the men’s singles competition at the Dutch Open Super 100 tournament on Wednesday.

Sameer notched up a 21-19, 21-13 win over fellow Indian Kiran George in the second round.

Lakshya outclassed Cuba’s Osleni Guerrero 21-12, 21-12. Lakshya had beaten Ireland’s Nhat Nguyen 21-19, 21-17 in the opening round.

Rahul progressed with a 21-18, 21-13 win over Malaysia’s Cheam June Wei, but Sourabh Verma bowed out.

**Other result (second round):** Kai Schaefer (Ger) bt Sourabh Verma 21-17, 10-21, 21-19.