

Kohli and Jadeja send the South Africans on a leather hunt

India declares its first essay at a gargantuan 601 for five and its pacers quickly remove three top-order batsmen

SA IN INDIA
AMOL KARHADKAR
PUNE
Virat Kohli is a master at converting fifties into big hundreds. And the India captain couldn't have asked for a better situation than his 50th Test as captain to gallop to his personal best to virtually seal the fate of the second Test – and the Freedom Series – on the second day of the game.

Thanks to Kohli's unbeaten 254 and contrasting yet vital support by his deputy Ajinkya Rahane and allrounder Ravindra Jadeja, India declared its first essay at a gargantuan 601 for five at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium here.

Umesh Yadav then got rid of both the tired openers to leave South Africa reeling at 13 for two.

Nagging lines
India may have added 328 runs to its overnight total of 273 for three in just over 71 overs before calling curtains

on the innings but the Proteas' pace duo of Vernon Philander and Kagiso Rabada bowled nagging lines early on in the morning.

Kohli and Rahane were fortunate to have not nicked in the cordon, with Kohli's soft hands ensuring none of his edges carried to fielders.

After the first hour, while Rahane continued to concentrate on retaining his wicket, Kohli started rotating the strike, literally at will. Once Keshav Maharaj's left-arm spin was introduced, Rahane – having survived a close lbw shout off the first ball – started scoring a little freely and he and Kohli were involved in a mini-race for getting to their fifty and hundred, respectively.

While Rahane raised his fifty first with a dab to Anrich Nortje at mid-wicket for a single, Kohli fittingly crossed his 26th Test hundred with a straight-driven four, his 16th, off Philander.

The closest the duo came to separation was in the last over before lunch when Ra-



On top of his game: Virat Kohli was in pristine form as he smashed a career-best, unbeaten 254. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

hane survived an attempted single, with Temba Bavuma's rocket throw missing the stumps by a whisker.

Minutes after lunch, Kohli

switched gears with two glorious straight drives in an over off Rabada and followed it up with two supreme cover drives later in the spell to as-

certain his authority in the mini-battle.

Rahane, however, couldn't deal with a typical left-arm spinner's delivery that spun

SCOREBOARD	
INDIA – 1ST INNINGS Mayank Agarwal c du Plessis b Rabada 108 (195b, 16x4, 2x6), Rohit Sharma c de Kock b Rabada 14 (35b, 1x4), Cheteshwar Pujara c du Plessis b Rabada 58 (112b, 9x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli (not out) 254 (336b, 33x4, 2x6), Ajinkya Rahane c de Kock b Maharaj 59 (168b, 8x4), Ravindra Jadeja c de Bruyn b Muthusamy 91 (104b, 8x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-6, nb-11): 17; Total (for five wkts. decl. in 156.3 overs): 601.	FALL OF WICKETS 1-25 (Rohit, 9.6 overs), 2-163 (Pujara, 50.6), 3-198 (Mayank, 60.6), 4-376 (Rahane, 117.2), 5-601 (Jadeja, 156.3). SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING Philander 26-6-66-0, Rabada 30-3-93-3, Nortje 25-5-100-0, Maharaj 50-10-196-1, Muthusamy 19.3-1-97-1, Elgar 4-0-26-0, Markram 2-0-17-0. SOUTH AFRICA – 1ST INNINGS Dean Elgar b Umesh 6 (13b, 1x4), Aiden Markram lbw b
Umesh 0 (2b), Theunis de Bruyn (batting) 20 (38b, 4x4), Temba Bavuma c Saha b Shami 8 (15b, 1x4), Anrich Nortje (batting) 2 (22b); Total (for three wkts. in 15 overs): 36.	FALL OF WICKETS 1-2 (Markram, 1.2), 2-13 (Elgar, 3.5), 3-33 (Bavuma, 9.1). INDIA BOWLING Ishant 4-0-17-0, Umesh 4-1-16-2, Jadeja 4-4-0-0, Shami 3-1-3-1.

slightly away from him to give Maharaj a reason to rejoice.

With the 178-run partnership coming to an end, Jadeja adopted a cautious approach while Kohli continued to drive and flick through the gaps. One of the features of Kohli's batting in the recent years has been his ability to score freely despite not getting aerial and it came to the fore in plenty as he plundered 90 runs in the session.

When the duo returned to the crease, Kohli was six runs shy of his record seventh double hundred, and he got

there in the third over of the session with a flick to fine-leg for a couple off Senuran Muthusamy. Then Kohli pulled the spinner into the stands.

The next ball, Faf du Plessis – who had earlier failed to get a finger to at least two half-chances offered by Kohli off Maharaj – took a sharp catch in the slips but the re-plays showed Muthusamy had overstepped.

Toying with spinners
The next ten overs saw Jadeja and Kohli toying with the

A decade on, turning over a new leaf together

AMOL KARHADKAR
PUNE
In the World-conquering under-19 squad of India, one was the captain, and the other was his deputy. More than a decade down the line, the flamboyant Kohli has evolved into India's most successful Test captain, while Ravindra Jadeja has emerged as a reliable allrounder across formats.

It was fitting that when Kohli eclipsed a plethora of record to become the first Indian to score seven double hundreds here at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium on a frantic Friday, Jadeja complemented him from the other end as the duo shut the doors on South Afri-



Change for the better? Jadeja's elevation in the batting order could benefit him as well as the team. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

ca with a whirlwind 225-run partnership off just 237 balls.

With the duo among the fittest cricketers, it didn't come as a surprise that their

running between the wickets was outstanding, with Kohli converting twos into threes the moment Jadeja joined him in the middle.

When Jadeja replaced vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane at the crease, Kohli was at his breezy best. While his captain was on a rampage, scoring 90 runs off 103 balls in the second session, Jadeja played the second fiddle to perfection, accumulating just 25 runs off 59 balls.

It was also imperative for Jadeja to showcase his ability to bat responsibly, having been promoted to No. 6 with India preferring five special-

ist batters for the game.

Different tale
It was a different tale after tea. Jadeja amassed 66 runs off 45 balls and matched his captain stroke for stroke. No wonder then that the on-

slaught after the break brought 128 runs in just 15 overs before Jadeja's dismissal and the Indian declaration.

Despite their association going all the way back to their junior days, Jadeja appeared to have lost the faith of his captain a couple of years ago, especially in the shorter formats. Having clawed his way back into the blues, the Jamnagar jammer also seems to have earned enough confidence of the team management to bat at No. 6.

If the Indian think-tank persists with him at the batting position, especially while playing at home, Friday could well be the first of many more partnerships between by Kohli and Jadeja.

'India-A games help bridge gap in standards'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE
Mayank Agarwal, the opener who is one of the successful by-products of the system involving India-A tours, said it has been instrumental in bridging the gap between domestic and international cricket.
"India-A games really helped bridge the gap between domestic and international cricket because the kind of teams you are facing and kind of teams other countries are fielding for those games are top quality. So you know that you are almost playing international standard of bowling. It does help you bridge gap between domestic and international cricket," Mayank said on Friday.

Maharaj taken for scan
The joy on becoming the second fastest South African spinner to 100 Test wickets was shortlived for Keshav Maharaj as an injury to his right shoulder while diving off his own bowling has put the left-arm's further participation in the game in doubt.
"Not sure of his (injury). He has gone for an MRI (scan). As soon as we know the results, we will update you guys," said Enoch Nkwe, interim team director.

Yoddha beats Bulls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GREATER NOIDA
UP Yoddha wrapped up its home leg in style, beating Bengaluru Bulls 45-33 to set up the Pro Kabaddi League Eliminator against Bengaluru Bulls.
Third-placed Yoddha will face sixth-placed Bulls in Eliminator 1 on Oct. 14.
Other result: Dabang Delhi 37 drew with U Mumba 37.

India holds its nerve, pulls off win

Mithali, Punam help team take an unassailable 2-0 lead

SA WOMEN IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL
VADODARA
India held its nerve to record a five-wicket win over South Africa in the second women's ODI at Reliance Cricket ground here on Friday. Chasing a stiff 248-run target, the home team was cruising with Mithali Raj (66, 82b, 4x8) and Punam Raut (65, 92b, 7x4) at the crease, until the duo fell within the space of four balls.

From a comfortable 195 for two, India slipped and let South Africa back into the contest. Harmanpreet Kaur (39 n.o., 27b, 5x4, 1x6), however, came in and took her team past the finish line with 12 balls to spare.

The exciting win gave India an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. It marked the nation's highest-ever successful ODI chase, bettering the previous target of 245 (against South Africa in February 2017).

Solid foundation
It was Mithali and Punam who laid a solid foundation, adding 129 runs for the third wicket. They dispatched the loose stuff to the boundary, and ran briskly between the wickets.

Mithali reached her 53rd ODI fifty with a single to long-on, but with no score-



Giving it the treatment: Mithali Raj led from the front as India defeated South Africa by five wickets. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

board at the ground, she did not realise that she had reached the milestone. She later got the message, and raised her bat to the crowd.

Punam was a tad more cautious than Mithali, but equally effective. Both Mithali and Punam eventually fell to poor shot selection, with Mithali slashing hard outside off and Punam attempting a dangerous scoop.

Wayward bowling
The home team was helped by some wayward bowling from South Africa, which sent down 29 wides.

Put in, South Africa came up with a much improved show to post a competitive total. Openers Lizelle Lee (40, 54b) and Laura Wolvaardt (69, 98b) were in fine

touch during their 76-run partnership.

Mignon du Preez (44, 48b, 2x4, 1x6) and southpaw Lara Goodall (38, 32b, 5x4) attacked in the middle and late overs, keeping the score moving at a healthy rate.

Shikha Pandey, Ekta Bisht and Poonam Yadav picked up two wickets each.

The match was briefly halted when a dog ran onto the field during the Indian innings. Several ground security officials rushed to catch the intruder, but the dog proved too quick for them.

After hanging out near the boundary rope for a short while, the dog made its way out of the open gate door to huge applause from the amused crowd.

bonga 2 (8b), Taniya Bhatia (not out) 8 (13b, 1x4); Extras (w-29, lb-1): 30; Total (for five wkts. in 48 overs): 248.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-34 (Jemimah, 8.2 ov), 2-66 (Priya, 12.5), 3-195 (Mithali, 39.4), 4-196 (Punam, 40.1), 5-212 (Deepti, 43.1).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING
Shabnim 9-1-41-1, Marizanne 9-0-29-1, Ayabonga 10-0-69-3, Tumi 10-0-52-0, Nondumiso 5-0-28-0, Sune 5-0-28-0.
Toss: India. **PoM:** Punam Raut.

India Women won by five wickets with 12 balls to spare.

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