

# Ton-up Hit-Man roars back to form, India crush England to clinch ODI series

**Rohit's knock saw him surpass (10,987) Rahul Dravid's 10,889 runs to enter top-10 ODI run-scorers' list, hosts grab three-match series 2-0**

**PTI, CUTTACK:** Under pressure with questions over form and mounting retirement speculations, skipper Rohit Sharma silenced it all with a vintage 32nd century, firing India to a dominant four-wicket series-clinching victory over England in the second ODI, here, on Sunday.

Opting to bat on a belter, England were bowled out for 304 in 49.5 overs with left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (3/35) continuing his stranglehold over the visitors.

The 37-year-old Indian skipper made the chase a lopsided affair, returning to his World Cup 2023 best with impeccable timing and effortless strokeplay en route to his 90-ball 119 -- his century No 32 in ODIs that came just in time ahead of the Champions Trophy in less than two weeks.

## 2ND ODI: INDIA VS ENGLAND

His 90-ball masterclass, studded with seven sixes and 12 fours, set the tone as India cruised to the target in 44.3 overs to take an unbeatable 2-0 lead going into the final ODI in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

Shubman Gill also made a fluent 60 off 52 balls (9x4, 1x6) but it felt overshadowed in comparison to Rohit in their solid opening partnership of 136 runs -- their sixth century-plus stand together.

Back after missing out the Nagpur ODI because of a swollen knee, star batter Virat Kohli (5) fell cheaply edging a Adil Rashid leg-break. Rashid has now got Kohli four times in ODIs.

Rohit then had a fruitful 70-run stand with Shreyas Iyer (44) before he was dismissed off a full toss with Rashid taking a fine backward running catch.

Iyer soon departed following a runout, while KL Rahul (10) and Hardik Pandya (10) also fell cheaply.

But there was hardly any run-rate pressure and Axar Patel (41 not out) held his

PTI



India captain Rohit Sharma plays a shot during the second One Day International (ODI) match against England, at Barabati Stadium, in Cuttack-Odisha, on Sunday

ground as he along with Ravindra Jadeja (11 not out) completed the formalities with 33 balls to spare.

Rohit's knock also saw him surpass (10,987) Ra-

hul Dravid's 10,889 runs to enter the top-10 ODI run-scorers' list. He now requires 13 runs to complete 11,000 ODI runs.

His pull shots had preci-

sion, his cuts carried flair, and there were no mishits. He even unleashed a cool reverse sweep off Rashid, pure dominance written in his innings.

He signalled his intent early, charging down to Gus Atkinson for a four before flicking a six over mid-wicket with ease that had the Rohit-esque flair.

Against Saqib Mahmood, he opened the bat face to loft a stunning six over cover as he seemed to have got his mojo back.

A 35-minute floodlight failure when Rohit was on 29 couldn't disrupt his rhythm.

Resuming with the same intensity, he glanced Mahmood for a fine boundary and then took charge of Mark Wood's 140-plus deliveries with disdain.

Luck also played its part -- on 36, he survived an LBW call against Wood on the umpire's call, with the ball clipping the top of leg stump.

The very next delivery, he responded in style, launching an over-pitched delivery over mid-on for a six as he raced to a 30-ball fifty.

Against Rashid, he was equally assured, cutting and sweeping the leg-spinner for boundaries.

He brought up his three figures in 76 balls, spanking Rashid over long-off -- his first in 14 innings.

This was also his second fastest hundred. His fastest was a 63-ball hundred against Afghanistan in the 2023 World Cup.

## SCOREBOARD

**England:** Philip Salt c Jadeja b Chakravarthy 26, Ben Duckett c Pandya b Jadeja 65, Joe Root c Kohli b Jadeja 69, Harry Brook c Gill b Rana 31, \*Jos Buttler c Gill b Pandya 34, Liam Livingstone run out (Rahul) 41, Jamie Overton c Gill b Jadeja 6, Gus Atkinson c Kohli b Shami 3, Adil Rashid run out (Rahul) 14, Mark Wood run out (Rahul) 0, Saqib Mahmood not out 0. **Extras:** 15. **Total:** 304-10. **Fall of wickets:** 82-1, 102-2, 168-3, 219-4, 248-5, 258-6, 272-7, 297-8, 304-9, 304-10. **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 7-5-0-66-1, Harshit Rana 9-0-62-1, Hardik Pandya 7-0-53-1, Varun Chakravarthy 10-0-54-1, Ravindra Jadeja 10-1-35-3, Axar Patel 6-0-32-0.

**India:** \*Rohit Sharma c Rashid b Livingstone 119, Shubman Gill b Overton 60, Virat Kohli c Salt b Rashid 5, Shreyas Iyer run out (Rashid) 44, Axar Patel not out 41, KL Rahul c Salt b Overton 10, Hardik Pandya c Overton b Atkinson 10, Ravindra Jadeja not out 11. **Extras:** 8. **Total:** 308-6. **Fall of wickets:** 136-1, 150-2, 220-3, 258-4, 275-5, 286-6. **Bowling:** Saqib Mahmood 6-0-36-0, Gus Atkinson 7-0-65-1, Mark Wood 8-0-57-0, Adil Rashid 10-0-78-1, Jamie Overton 5-0-27-2, Liam Livingstone 7-0-29-1, Joe Root 1-3-0-15-0.

**Man-of-the-match:** Rohit Sharma

## England to fly in Banton as cover for injured Jacob Bethell

**CUTTACK:** England on Sunday called up batter Tom Banton as a cover for injured all-rounder Jacob Bethell for third ODI against India at Ahmedabad. Bethell, who scored a half-century and took a wicket in England's four-wicket defeat in the first ODI at Nagpur, had sustained a left hamstring injury. "The injury will be assessed further when the team arrives in Ahmedabad on Monday (for the third ODI on Wednesday)," said an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) release on Sunday. The 26-year-old Banton, a wicketkeeper-batter has played six ODIs, scoring 134 runs with a highest of 58. "Banton, who last played for England in an ODI in August 2020, has been in outstanding form in T20 franchise cricket. He is currently the leading run-scorer in the UAE T20 competition, where he has amassed 493 runs from 11 innings at an average of 54.77, including two centuries," said the release. Banton will arrive in India on Monday.



## Bosch replaces Nortje in South Africa's Champions Trophy squad

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa on Sunday named relatively newcomer Corbin Bosch as a replacement for injured fast bowler Anrich Nortje for the Champions Trophy later this month. Nortje was ruled out of the marquee ICC event with a recurring back injury last month. Bosch, 30, who made his international debut in December last year, has played just one ODI, scoring an unbeaten 40 and taking a wicket with his right-arm pace bowling. "Along with Bosch, South Africa have also added fast bowler Kwena Maphaka in the squad as a travelling reserve. The two fast bowlers along with batter Tony de Zorzi will travel to Pakistan on Sunday to join the squad for the remainder of their ODI (tri-) series," the ICC said in a release. Last month, Cricket South Africa (CSA) had said Nortje would not be in line to recover for the Champions Trophy, commencing in Pakistan and Dubai on February 19. Nortje had also missed out on the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India due to a stress fracture in his back.



## Gukesh goes down to Caruana in Freestyle Grand Slam

**HAMBURG (Germany):** World Champion D Gukesh suffered a rare setback in normal time control, losing to USA's Fabiano Caruana in the first game of the quarterfinals of the Freestyle Grand Slam chess tournament here. Gukesh was at the top of his game for a good part, improvising when it was necessary but he failed to find a queen sacrifice in the latter stages of the middle game. It changed the course of the game for him. Caruana was quick to take charge of the situation and did not give a chance for the Indian to make a comeback. Meanwhile, Magnus Carlsen, the main protagonist behind the tour, scored a fine win over Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan. Alireza Firouzja of France lost to Vincent Keymer of Germany in the opener. In the other game of the quarters, Jakovhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan played out a draw with Hikaru Nakamura while in the inconsequential 9th place decider, American Levon Aronian won his first game at the expense of Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia.



## Shuttler Sindhu pulls out of BAMTC 2025 due to hamstring issues

**NEW DELHI:** Two-time Olympic medalist shuttler PV Sindhu has pulled out of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships in China due to a hamstring issue, dealing a huge blow to the country's chances of improving the colour of their medal in the prestigious edition. The tournament is set to be played in Qingdao from February 11-16 with the Indian shuttlers currently undergoing training at a camp in Guwahati. Besides Sindhu, the other leading players in the camp are Lakshya Sen, and HS Prannoy, along with the formidable doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. Sindhu was a part of the squad that won bronze in the previous edition of the tournament. "It is with a heavy heart that I share I won't be travelling with the team for BAMTC 2025. While training on the 4th (February) in Guwahati, I felt a twinge in my hamstring. Despite my efforts to push through with heavy taping for our country, an MRI has revealed that my recovery will take slightly longer than I initially expected," said the 29-year-old Sindhu in a post on 'X'. India are placed in a tough Group D alongside runners-up South Korea and Macau. They will begin their campaign against Macau on February 12, which will be followed by a tough outing against South Korea on February 13.



## Mary Kom, Saina & Leander named in Govt Sports Experts Advisory panel

**NEW DELHI:** The government has constituted a committee to be headed by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya with three Olympic medalists as members to advice on identification and grooming of talent, ensure fair and transparent selection and monitor the performance of athletes competing at international events as well evaluate the coaches. The 17-member Sports Experts Advisory Committee will have celebrated boxer Mary Kom, tennis legend Leander Paes and trail-blazer shuttler Saina Nehwal, who all have won Olympic medals, as members. Union Minister of State for Sports Raksha Khadse will be the vice chairperson and sports secretary/joint secretary will be the convenor. The committee is made up of government delegates and retired eminent athletes from various sports, according to a Sports Ministry circular issued on Saturday. The committee's objectives include talent identification and advising for development of sub-junior and junior level athletes for training, oversee selection of national athletes/teams to ensure fair and transparent selection, observe the coaching facilities during national camps, observe and provide analysis on performance of India/foreign coaches attached to the national teams and progress of the performance of the national campers.

## We knew it was matter of just one innings: Jadeja on Rohit

**PTI, CUTTACK:** The scathing criticism from all quarters wasn't something that perturbed Rohit Sharma's Indian teammates who knew that their skipper was just a knock away from getting back into his element, senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja said.

The innings came at the perfect time, just weeks before the Champions Trophy (CT), reaffirming his importance to the team.

"The entire world may be behind him but in our dressing room, there was no such atmosphere. He is such a great player that he knows exactly how to build an innings," Jadeja said at the post-match media interaction. The all-rounder added that such phases are normal for great players.

"It's just a matter of one good inning. As you saw, it didn't even feel like he hadn't scored runs in the previous innings. The shots he played were smooth and he looked confident. Just played normal strokes."

Jadeja emphasised that there was never any panic within the squad despite external criticism.

"Sometimes, it just takes one or two innings to turn things around. The good thing is that, before an important tournament like the CT, scoring a hundred is a huge boost. It's great for the team, and obviously, he himself knows his game well. There's nothing much to think or discuss."

# Australia secures first Test series win in Sri Lanka in 14 years

AFP



Australia's players pose with the trophy after their win at the end of the second Test match against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle

**AP, GALLE (Sri Lanka):** Australia wrapped up a comprehensive 2-0 series victory over Sri Lanka, sealing the second test with a commanding nine-wicket win in Galle on Sunday.

Top order batter Marnus Labuschagne flicked a delivery from retiring Sri Lankan player Dimuth Karunaratne to mid-wicket to complete the triumph, just 15 minutes before lunch on the fourth day.

It's Australia's first test series win on Sri Lankan soil since 2011.

Their last success here came under Ricky Ponting's captaincy, a 1-0 victory in 2011. However, they suffered a 3-0 whitewash in 2016 under Steve Smith's leadership, and the 2022 series ended in a 1-1 draw. This time, with Smith standing in as captain for Pat Cummins, the victory was a welcome redemption.

Their batters laid the

foundation with big hundreds, allowing the bowlers to dictate terms with attacking fields. Meanwhile, the spinners displayed remarkable discipline and variety, putting relentless pressure on Sri Lanka.

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vice-captain Kusal Mendis, who had remained unbeaten overnight.

Mendis brought up his second half-century in the game by guiding Nathan Lyon to deep cover but perished in the same over, caught at short square leg by Steve Smith.

The dismissal was a milestone moment -- Smith's 200th Test catch, a feat previously achieved by only four players: Jacques Kallis, Mahela Jayawardene, and Joe Root. Beau Webster wrapped up the innings soon after, leaving Australia with a modest target of 75 runs.

Sri Lanka briefly found

hope when Prabath Jayasuriya removed Travis Head (20) early, caught behind. However, Usman Khawaja (27 not out) and Marnus Labuschagne (26 not out) calmly guided the visitors home with an unbroken 37-run stand.

Alex Carey was named Man of the Match for his outstanding 156 and four dismissals behind the stumps. His innings stands as the highest score by an Australian wicketkeeper in Asia.

This victory marks Australia's fourth consecutive test win, having also won the final two matches of its recent 3-1 home series against India. It plays South Africa in the final of the World Test Championship at Lords in June.

Sri Lanka slumped to its fourth straight defeat and marked a disappointing end for 36-year-old opener Karunaratne in his 100th and final Test.

## Karunaratne retires

**PTI, DUBAI:** The International Cricket Council on Sunday lavished praise on former Sri Lankan captain and prolific opener Dimuth Karunaratne, who brought the curtains down on his glittering international career along with his 100th Test against Australia in Galle.

Karunaratne scored 36 and 14 in his farewell Test as Australia won the match by nine wickets to make a clean sweep of the two-game series.

"Dimuth has had a very fine career during which he excelled as a batter in the most traditional format of the game, becoming only the seventh from his country to feature in 100 Tests," said ICC chairman Jay Shah.

Karunaratne, 36, scored 7222 runs in Tests at a healthy average of nearly 40, including a top score of 244. He also played 50 ODIs, scoring 1,316 runs.

He captained Sri Lanka in 30 Tests between 2019 and 2023, winning 12 and losing 12 while in charge.

The left-hander made his international debut against England in an ODI at Manchester in 2011.

All his 16 Test tons came as an opener, a record for most centuries by a Sri Lankan in that position that he holds jointly with former captain Marvan Atapattu.

But his most cherished feat came when he led Sri Lanka to a 2-0 Test series win over South Africa in 2019, and the Island nation became the first Asian side to win an away Test rubber against Proteas since their readmission to cricket.