

Debutant Suthar takes three after Gill, Rahul centuries lead India to 564

CHANDIGARH: India had two centuries - Shubman Gill (126) and KL Rahul (100). They also had two batters making 81 each - B Sai Sudharsan and Rishabh Pant. But it was left-arm spinner Manav Suthar's successful introduction to Test cricket that was their biggest W on day two of the one-off Test against Afghanistan in New Chandigarh.

Suthar bowled nearly two hours after tea, and took 1 for 20 in a marathon spell of 12.2 overs. He got lavish drift and turn with the new ball, and held his lengths nicely. Suthar eventually struck on the stroke of both tea and stumps, and finished with a three-for.

There was good support from Prasadh Krishna and Kuldeep Yadav even as Rahmat Shah (43*) showed some resistance for Afghanistan.

Earlier in the day, India's batting continued to dominate from a position of strength as all ten batters got to double figures, while Washington Sundar (52*) ground the Afghanistan bowlers down in the heat.

Mohammad Saleem, though, was lion-hearted in his second Test, and finished with a six-for. Azmatullah Omarzai had also started well, and missed out twice due to Afghanistan not using the DRS.

India declared and bowled at Afghanistan for 20 minutes before tea. Openers Sediquallah Atal and Abdul Malik worked past nervy moments, and picked up two boundaries each off Mohammed Siraj. Malik looked to sweep Suthar off a length after the first three balls spun big, but only managed a top edge to backward square leg.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz defended decisively, didn't mind getting beaten, and played the odd sweep. In 33 balls, he scored seven runs with 31 dots. Suthar got



him with a ripper turning away to take the edge for a low catch at second slip.

Meanwhile, Prasadh bowled a snorter that seamed in to flatten Atal's middle stump, and also sent off stump flying. Rahmat had a bit of luck when he was hit on the pad by Suthar, in the 16th over, as the contact was made more than three metres from the stumps.

Kuldeep had a couple of near moments go against him. A drive from Rahmat went teasingly above him in the 21st over. Rahul then dropped Hashmatullah Shahidi at first slip in the 25th.

Washington replaced Suthar for a couple of overs. Shahidi survived an lbw call with DRS thanks to an inside edge. That wasn't possible next over, when he missed a flick off Prasadh.

Suthar returned, Washington changed ends, and Afghanistan's batters seemed to shut shop in the last few overs. There were no real boundary shots attempted. Rahmat danced down and smacked Suthar over the head for six. Af-sar Zazai saw a short ball down leg sit up and wound up big for the pull shot, but checked his shot halfway and got a top edge that ballooned back to the bowler.

When India batted earlier on day two, Afghanistan started the second session with spin - much to Suthar's delight. He helped himself to two sixes off Shahidi as India made 28 off the first three overs after lunch. Saleem joined Omarzai to cut down runs at first. It led to Suthar being caught behind looking to drive through cover, and completed Saleem's five-for.

Siraj, promoted over Kuldeep Yadav, scored all his runs in boundaries. He took apart left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote, and cut Saleem despite not getting width. Saleem responded by beating Siraj's slog and denting middle stump.

Washington and Kuldeep didn't hurry, though. Saleem continued to bowl at a high pace even after bowling upwards of 25 overs, and beat Kuldeep's edge regularly. The only bit of intent against Saleem came in the final over of the innings. Washington started it with a pulled six, and flicked one past mid-on to bring up fifty.

The day began with India on 368 for 3 will Gill and Pant at the crease. Afghanistan took the new ball in the second over, and found seam and swing immediately. Omarzai trapped Gill

in front of leg stump, and had Pant nick to the wicket-keeper the very next ball in the 89th over. The umpire gave them both not out, but the decision wasn't challenged on both occasions. Afghanistan had one review remaining at the time but failed to make use of it.

After facing a maiden off Ziaur Rahman, Pant charged at him early in the over twice, and picked up boundaries. Gill then brought up India's 400 with a cut. He picked up two more boundaries off Saleem, who replaced Zia, when he went full and then short.

Saleem, though, remained undeterred. He gradually pulled his length back in the 96th over, and had Gill nick to the keeper at the stroke of drinks. Gill added 23 to his overnight score of 103. In his following over, Saleem nearly had Pant chop on. He held his length and was punished by Pant and Dhruv Jurel when he went short.

The ball after Jurel's pulled four brought up India's 450. Jurel shouldered arms, and Saleem nipped it back to hit top of off. Saleem bowled seven overs in the morning and was expensive, conceding 42 runs, but got the set batters and kept it tight late in his spell.

LG's Diary

Office of LG J&K

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Laid a wreath and paid homage to our Army Braveheart Lieutenant Beereswar Goswami. The nation will forever remain indebted to his supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. We stand firmly with the family of the martyr in this difficult hour.

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Joined 'Drug-Free J&K' campaign today in Poonch. Padyatra, carried out with strong public participation & firm resolve, has covered all 20 districts of UT. Our intention is noble & our objective is clear to free the soil of J&K from scourge of drugs & to eliminate narco-terrorism.

CM's Diary

Office of Chief Minister, J&K

@CM_JnK

#Highlights- Chief Minister's week in action.

youtu.be/LqibtkyYhkk

WI look to level series in rainy Kingston

NEW DELHI: With no play possible in the second ODI, both teams go into the third game well-rested. Perhaps this is a chance for the IPL returnees in particular to have caught their breath. The rain, though, may not have cleared in Kingston completely. According to the forecast, showers are likely in the afternoon and also possible in the evening, though there may be dry spells in between. There is a chance this will be a stop-start match in which DLS calculations come into play.

With a series win now beyond them, West Indies will be especially motivated to avoid being blanked at home. There is also the matter of their current 10th-placed ranking, which is not enough for them to gain automatic qualification for the 2027 World Cup (cut-off is end of March next year). They need every ranking point

they can get over the next two months. Sri Lanka are slightly more comfortable, at sixth position, and about 12 points clear of the current cut-off. But they'll want to build more of a cushion themselves.

In the first ODI, Sri Lanka's dominance in the middle overs is what had won them the match. Maheesh Theekshana and Wanindu Hasaranga were economical on a helpful surface, where West Indies' frontline spinner Gudakesh Motie had been hit out of the attack. And Sri Lanka's top six also showed serious hustle, picking up the tempo and keeping the runs flowing after Sri Lanka had had a poor powerplay with the bat.

These remain two relatively evenly-matched teams, however. With a little more discipline from their bowlers, West Indies are capable of leveling the series.

YS&S Bandipora organises 'Sunday on Cycle' under Fit India Run 2026 Initiative

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA: Department of Youth Services and Sports (YS&S), Bandipora successfully organised "Sunday on Cycle" under the banner of Fit India Run 2026.

The cycling event was conducted from Kangri Chowk to Forest Ground Chatternaar. Bandipora, promoting fitness, healthy lifestyle and environmental awareness among youth and the general public.

A huge number of participants from different areas enthusiastically took part in the event, making it a grand success. The initiative aimed

to encourage physical activity and spread the message of "Fit India, Healthy India" among the masses.

Officials from YS&S Bandipora appreciated the active participation of students and youth and

expressed gratitude to all stakeholders for making the event successful.

The programme concluded on a positive note with a strong message to continue such fitness-oriented activities in the future.

Harry Kane Edges England To Underwhelming New Zealand Victory

WASHINGTON: Harry Kane's 79th international goal edged England to a 1-0 win over New Zealand as the Three Lions' World Cup preparations got off to an underwhelming start in the Florida heat. Kane flicked in Djed Spence's cross in first half stoppage time as England laboured to victory against a side 81 places below them in the world rankings. "We're here for preparation more than the result," said Kane after his 67th goal of the season for club and country. "It's the best shape I've ever been in my career."

"I'm excited, can't wait for it to get started."

New Zealand were thrashed 4-0 by Haiti on Wednesday but Thomas Tuchel's men found clear-

cut chances far harder to come by in their first experience of the brutal conditions in the United States.

Tuchel named two entirely different sides for each half, but there was little to read into his team selection ahead of England's opening game of the World Cup against Croatia on June 17.

"The energy is right and the quality will come," said Tuchel. "The better the opponent gets, the better we will get."

Kane typically made the breakthrough from an in-swinging cross by Spence, who impressed at left-back.

Ivan Toney replaced Kane among the 11 changes made by Tuchel at the break.

2 IPL Titles Not Enough? Ajit Agarkar Explains Rajat Patidar T20I Snub

NEW DELHI: Such are the dynamics of Indian cricket that even deserving players get snubbed. Rajat Patidar, the man who led Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to two consecutive Indian Premier League (IPL) titles, continues to be overlooked as far as India's T20I selection is concerned. As the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selection committee picked the squad for the upcoming series in Ireland and England, as well as the forthcoming Asian Games, Patidar's name was nowhere to be seen.

Patidar's name remained absent from the squad list despite him playing a pivotal role in RCB's back-to-back IPL titles in 2025 and

2026. The middle-order batter was overlooked even as the selection committee made a plethora of changes to the squad, bringing in Vaibhav Sooryavanshi whilst replacing Suryakumar Yadav as captain with Shreyas Iyer.

When Ajit Agarkar, the chief of the BCCI selection committee, was asked about the decision to snub Patidar, he admitted that not all deserving players can be selected as only 15 members can be named in the squad.

"We discussed a host of players. We think these 15 are deserving. There are a lot of good players in India. There are plenty who are good enough to walk into the team, but the guys playing are doing as well as they

can. We think we've picked a good squad. There will always be players missing out, but we've picked a good squad, and we are happy with this one," Agarkar said, speaking at a press conference on Saturday.

In the IPL 2026 campaign, Patidar scored 501 runs at a strike rate of 192.69, showing an incredible ability to change the pace of his game according to the situation. His tally included 30 fours and 42 sixes as he emerged as one of the most fearsome batters in the middle overs.

When it came to the phase between overs 12 and 16, Patidar scored a whopping 234 runs from 108 balls at a strike rate of 216.67.

Total solar eclipse to darken skies across Europe and Asia in 2026

Skywatchers across parts of Europe, North Africa and Asia are preparing for a rare celestial spectacle as a total solar eclipse is set to darken the skies on August 12, 2026.

The eclipse, one of the most anticipated astronomical events of the decade, will occur when the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, completely blocking sunlight for observers located along a narrow path known as the "path of totality."

According to astronomers, the path of totality will stretch across parts of Greenland, Iceland, Spain, Russia and portions of Central Asia. Millions of people in these regions will experience several minutes of daytime darkness as the Moon completely covers the Sun. Outside the path of totality, a much larger area across Europe, Africa and Asia will witness a partial solar eclipse.

Spain is expected to be one of the most popular destinations for eclipse chasers, with several cities

positioned directly under the path of totality.

The August 2026 eclipse is attracting significant attention because it will be one of the longest and most accessible total solar eclipses visible from Europe in decades.

For many countries along the eclipse route, it will be the first total solar eclipse visible in generations.

Scientists say total solar eclipses offer a rare opportunity to study the Sun's outer atmosphere, known as the corona, which normally remains hidden by the Sun's intense brightness.

Yes, parts of India are expected to witness the August 12, 2026 solar eclipse, but not as a total solar eclipse. Most locations across the country will see a partial solar eclipse, with the extent of coverage varying by region. The eclipse will be visible around sunset in many northern and western parts of India, where observers may be able to see a portion of the Sun obscured by the Moon before it dips below the

horizon.

However, India does not lie within the path of totality, meaning observers in the country will not experience the dramatic daytime darkness associated with a total solar eclipse. Astronomers advise using certified solar viewing glasses or appropriate solar filters while observing the event, as looking directly at the partially eclipsed Sun can cause serious eye damage.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the Sun, Moon and Earth align perfectly.

As the Moon gradually moves across the Sun, daylight begins to fade. Once totality begins, the Sun's bright disk disappears completely, revealing the faint corona surrounding it. The period of totality can last from a few seconds to several minutes depending on an observer's location within the eclipse path. After totality ends, sunlight rapidly returns as the Moon continues its orbit.

Astronomers are reminding the public that looking directly at the

Sun without proper eye protection can cause permanent eye damage.

Special eclipse glasses certified for solar viewing are required during all partial phases of the eclipse. The only time it is safe to view the eclipse without protection is during the brief period of totality when the Sun is completely covered.

The August 2026 event is expected to attract thousands of tourists, scientists and astronomy enthusiasts to locations along the path of totality.

Experts note that while partial solar eclipses occur relatively frequently somewhere on Earth, total solar eclipses are much rarer for any given location. As a result, many eclipse enthusiasts travel across the world to witness the phenomenon.

For those fortunate enough to be within the eclipse path, August 12, 2026, promises a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience one of nature's most dramatic spectacles.

Amazon brings AI shopping assistant to retailers with Kate Spade

Amazon is offering its AI shopping technology to other retailers through a new Agentic Shopping Assistant built on AWS, with Kate Spade among the first brands to use it.

The service allows retailers to build AI shopping assistants for their own websites and apps. Amazon said each deployment can be customised to a retailer's catalogue, customer base, shopping environment, and brand voice.

The service is based on technology first developed for Amazon's own online store. Now, it's packaging architecture, starter code, and lessons from Alexa for Shopping for use by other retailers.

More than 300 million customers used Amazon's AI shopping assistant last year, according to the company, the assistant generating nearly US\$12 billion in incremental sales in the same period.

Amazon said the service lets retailers deploy conversational agents "in weeks," rather than the years building from scratch might take.

The offering includes architecture guidance, starter code, and help from AWS experts and system integrator partners.

Kate Spade uses AI for gift shopping. Kate Spade, owned by Tapestry, is one of the first brands to use the technology, introducing an AI Gift Concierge that helps shoppers find gift options through a conver-

sational interface. The assistant is focused on gift-buying, with Amazon citing its own data that reveals 53% of shoppers "report stress" during gift purchases.

The assistant can recommend gifts based on occasion and customer inputs. Fabio Luczi, Tapestry's chief data and analytics officer, told Digital Commerce 360 that the tool came from listening to consumers and identifying what they needed when shopping for gifts.

Tapestry tested the assistant for about two and a half months before making it available to consumers, according to Amazon's announcement.

The system uses Amazon Bedrock, AgentCore, and OpenSearch. Bedrock is the basis for generative AI applications, AgentCore operates AI agents, and OpenSearch is for search and retrieval.

Amazon said conversational shopping sessions generate conversion rates 3.5 times higher than traditional keyword-based product searches.

The AWS launch follows Amazon's roll-out of Alexa for Shopping in the US in May. That allows users to type shopping-related questions into Amazon's search bar and receive conversational answers. Under the hood, Alexa for Shopping brings together elements of Rufus and Alexa+ (Rufus was the AI shopping assistant Amazon launched in 2024).