

## Root enters top 5 century-makers, Eng 353/7 at lunch

London, (UNI)

Day 2 of the third Test between England and India at Lord's unfolded with drama, milestones, and a fiery Jasprit Bumrah spell that jolted the English middle order. By lunch, England had reached 353/7 in 105 overs, riding on a counterattacking partnership between Jamie Smith (51\*) and Brydon Carse (33\*).

The morning began with Joe Root reaching a significant milestone, bringing up his 37th Test hundred—a feat that takes him past Rahul Dravid and Steve Smith in the all-time list of most Test centuries. Root got to the mark on the second ball of the day, with a streaky four off Bumrah, sparking loud cheers around Lord's.



However, celebrations were short-lived. Bumrah, swinging the second new ball both ways, struck twice in the 87th over—

first dismantling Root's stumps for 104 (199 balls, 10 fours), and then trapping Chris Woakes caught behind on a successful re-

view. Ben Stokes, who had added 64 with Root overnight, was also castled by Bumrah earlier for 44, in a delivery that jagged in to

uproot his off-stump, his third wicket of the morning, marking a stunning turnaround by India.

England, at one stage 251/4 at stumps on Day 1, lost three wickets for just 10 runs this morning to slip to 271/7. But the pair of Jamie Smith and Brydon Carse steadied the ship, adding a crucial 50-run stand for the 8th wicket in 72 balls. Smith, especially aggressive, reached his fifty off just 52 balls, continuing his rich vein of form after success at Edgbaston.

There were some nervy moments too—Smith was dropped by KL Rahul at second slip on 33, but he capitalised fully, stroking fluent boundaries off Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Akash Deep.



## Iga Swiatek storms into maiden Wimbledon final

London, (UNI): World No. 8 Iga Swiatek of Poland stormed into her maiden Wimbledon final with a dominant 6-2, 6-0 win over Switzerland's Belinda Bencic in the women's singles semifinal on Centre Court today.

In a battle of first-time Wimbledon semifinalists, Swiatek needed just 1 hour and 12 minutes to dispatch the 35th-ranked Bencic, underlining her rapid transformation into a formidable force on grass, historically her weakest surface.

Swiatek, a former World No. 1, has not lifted a title since her triumph at Roland Garros in 2024. However, she is now just one win away from ending that drought, and doing so at the only Grand Slam where she had previously failed to reach the final.

The five-time Grand Slam champion has been in fine form this grass-court season, having reached her first final on the surface at Bad Homburg two weeks ago. With today's result, she advances to her second grass final, and her first at Wimbledon.

Despite earlier struggles on turf, Swiatek carries a flawless Grand Slam final record into Saturday's championship clash. She is 5-0 in major finals, with four titles at Roland Garros (2020, 2022, 2023, 2024) and one at the US Open in 2022.

She will meet No. 13 seed Amanda Anisimova of the United States in the title match. Remarkably, the two have never played each other on the WTA Tour. Their only previous meeting came as juniors in 2016, where Swiatek prevailed.

The 2025 Wimbledon ladies' singles champion will be crowned on July 12.

## Lara wanted me to chase world record: Mulder

Pretoria, (UNI)

South Africa all-rounder Wiaan Mulder has revealed he recently spoke with Brian Lara and the West Indies great indicated he would have preferred him to try and break his world record during the recent Test match against Zimbabwe. Mulder had the chance to break Lara's record for the highest score in Test cricket when he moved to 367 not out at lunch on day two of the Bulawayo Test against Zimbabwe, but chose to declare his side's innings at 626/5 at the time and allow the record innings of 400 by the West Indies legend to remain untouched.

While the declaration paid immediate dividends as South Africa cruised to a comfortable victory inside three days, debate has since raged as to whether Mulder should have chased Lara's record given he was within just 33 runs at the time of the declaration. Mulder, who was stand-in captain for the Test in the ab-

sence of first-choice skipper Temba Bavuma and back-up Keshav Maharaj, said at the time that he was happy to allow Lara's record to remain.

"You never know what is destined for me, but Brian Lara keeping that record (of the highest score in Tests) is exactly the way it should be," Mulder said after the Test finished earlier this week.

"He got 400 against England - for someone of that stature, to keep that record is pretty special. I think if I get the chance again, I will probably do the same thing."

While Mulder still believes he made the right decision to leave the record untouched, the South African suggested Lara saw it differently and thinks he should have pushed on and attempted to break his mark of 400.

"Now that things have settled a little bit, I've chatted a little bit to Brian Lara," Mulder told SuperSport.

## India slides to 133rd in FIFA men's rankings



New Delhi, (UNI)

The Indian men's football team has dropped six places to 133rd in the latest FIFA World Rankings released today.

The updated rankings reflect a significant downturn in performance, with India losing 18.81 points since the previous list, falling from 1132.03 to 1113.22.

The rankings update follows recent back-to-back losses in international fixtures, which have adversely impacted India's standing. This marks India's lowest position since November 2024, when they were also ranked 133rd.

In contrast, the Central African Republic climbed one

spot to 134th, gaining 5.74 points following a draw and a win in their latest outings.

Meanwhile, Guinea-Bissau fell three places to 131st and Congo dropped seven places to 132nd, both suffering point losses.

In the year so far, India's best rank was 127 in April 2025. The current position equals their worst rank this year. India saw a marginal drop of one spot in April, but July has recorded a steep fall of six positions.

The next FIFA World Rankings update is scheduled for September 18, giving India a 70-day window to regain lost ground through international matches or tournaments.

## 74 entries for National Karting Championship at Kovai this weekend

Coimbatore, (UNI)

As many as 74 youngsters representing 10 teams across four categories form highly competitive grids as the first round of the MECO-FMSI National Karting Championship Rotax Max Classes with SIDVIN Energy Engineering as the presenting sponsor and MRF Tyres as the partner sponsor, commences at the CoASTT circuit here on tomorrow.

The Championship comprises six rounds, with the grand finale slated for November 8-9. The four National champions in the Senior Max, Junior Max, Mini Max and Micro Max categories, identified on conclusion of the Championship, will represent India in the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals in Bahrain (Nov 29-Dec 6).

The 2025 season is featured by the introduction of the Mini Max category for racers under 11 years



of age positioned between the Micro and Junior Max classes.

The Senior Max has attracted 34 entries. Bengaluru racers Rishon Rajeet (Birel Art India) and brothers from Peregrine Racing Rohaan

Madesh and Ishaan Madesh, are expected to dominate, while the competition among the trio is likely to be close and thrilling.

The Junior Max category will be headlined by last year's champion

Pune's Arafath Sheikh (Crest Motorsports) and Chennai's Eshan Venkatesan (MSPORT) with a clutch of rookies ranged against them.

Competition is expected to be extremely sharp. In the Mini Max class which has a bunch of racers who have moved up from Micro Max. Riyaan Dev Preetham (Chennai, MSPORT), along with Hamza Balasianorwala (Mumbai, Crest Motorsports), Rehan Khan Rasheed (Chennai, MSPORT), Yatharth Gaur (Faridabad, Leapfrog Racing) and Danish Dalmiya (Pune, Rayo Racing), who were consistently claiming podiums in the Micro Max class last year, have all moved to the new Mini category.

The departure of the top five leaves the Micro Max field open with Bengaluru's Shiv Tummala of Peregrine Racing and Mumbai's Aarav Surekha of Rayo Racing, being the front runners.

## DSPC chief Parul Singh meets Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

New Delhi, (UNI)

Delhi Paralympic Committee chief Parul Singh met Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi today, to extend birthday wishes on his 74th birthday and discuss preparations for the upcoming World Para Athletics Championships 2025.

She also invited Rajnath Singh to attend the Championships, set for September 27 to October 5, 2025, at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. With over 1,000 athletes from more than 100 countries competing in 186 medal events, the event will be India's biggest para-sports gathering to date.

Rajnath Singh confirmed he would attend



and promised that the Ministry of Defence, along with its healthcare programs, would provide funding and resources to support the Championships.

He praised Parul Singh's leadership, noting her dedication in spearheading the Delhi Paralympic Committee's efforts to make the Championships a mile-

stone for Indian para-sports.

He assured that the Ministry of Defence stands ready to assist the Indian government in any capacity needed for the event, commending Singh's hard work in building a robust team and fostering inclusivity in sports.

"I am deeply honored by the Defence Minister's support and encouragement," said Parul Singh. "His commitment to the World Para Athletics Championships reflects a shared vision to empower para-athletes and create a lasting impact on India's sporting landscape. This is a proud moment for our team and for the nation."

## Pant injured, walks off mid-session at Lord's

London, (UNI)

India were dealt a major setback on the first afternoon of the third Test against England at Lord's today as vice-captain Rishabh Pant walked off the field with a hand injury midway through the second session, leaving the Indian camp visibly anxious. He was replaced by substitute wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel.

The incident occurred during the 34th over of England's first innings when Pant, attempting a full-stretch dive to his left, injured the fingers of his left hand while trying to collect a Jasprit Bumrah delivery that angled down the leg side to Ollie Pope. He immediately showed signs of pain and discomfort, clutching his hand and grimacing.

Pant had already received medical attention earlier in the session after taking another blow from Bumrah's delivery during the 26th over. The physio was called in again, applying spray and taping Pant's fingers heavily. Despite the discomfort, Pant attempted to continue, briefly resuming wicketkeeping with visible signs of pain.

Moments later, Jurel, who had previously kept for India A and was part of the squad during the home series, was seen getting ready in the Lord's corridor. After just three deliveries post-treatment, Pant eventually walked off at the end of the over, handing the gloves to Jurel.

The development caused visible concern in the Indian dressing room, with mentor Gautam Gambhir stepping out of the balcony to consult the support staff and later rushing inside after Pant exited the field.

## Carlsen beats ChatGPT without losing a piece

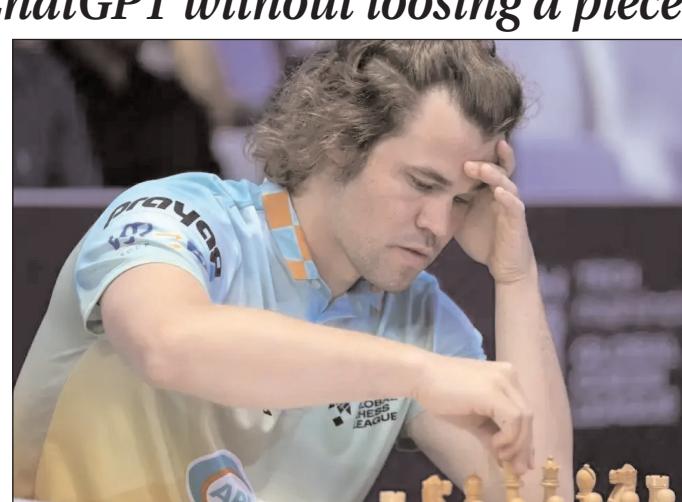
New Delhi, (UNI)

Chess legend Magnus Carlsen, having already dominated the over-the-board chess world with five classical world championships and a top global ranking in both Rapid and Blitz formats, is now turning his attention to facing Artificial Intelligence (AI) challenges.

The Norwegian recently took on OpenAI's conversational AI, ChatGPT, in a chess game, securing a decisive victory without losing a single piece.

Carlsen forced the AI to resign after 53 moves.

Sharing screenshots of his triumph, Carlsen quipped, "I sometimes get bored while travelling." The images show ChatGPT acknowledging its defeat, stating, "All my pawns



are gone. You haven't lost a single piece. You fulfilled your win condition perfectly... As agreed, I resign. That was methodical, clean and sharp."

Carlsen also offered con-

## New Pakistan coach outlines return path for Babar and Afridi

Islamabad (UNI)

Pakistan's new white-ball coach Mike Hesson has revealed the steps that experienced duo Babar Azam and Shaheen Afridi must take to work their way back into the T20I side.

Babar and Shaheen played a major role in helping Pakistan to consecutive appearances in the knockout stages of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2021 and 2022, but have recently fallen out of favour in the shortest format and were notable absents in Hesson's first squad that swept Bangladesh 3-0 on home soil at the start of last month.

Hesson suggested Babar and Shaheen are both still heavily in his long-term plans for next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka and the

pair are currently in Karachi taking part in a training camp alongside their teammates that will travel to Bangladesh later this month for a three-match T20I series in Mirpur.

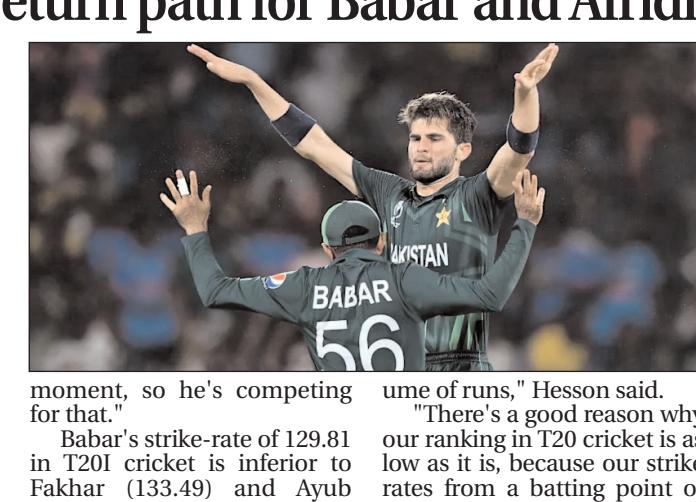
Hesson clarified that Babar's way back into the team was not by taking the gloves and becoming Pakistan's first-choice keeper, but that the former skipper was in a battle with fellow top-order batters Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub for one of two spots as opener.

"Firstly, Babar Azam is not seen as a wicket-keeping option, no," Hesson said.

"Not sure where that came from, but I have heard that speculation. Babar is competing for one of the opening positions at the moment. But obviously we have Fakhar and Saim in those two roles at the moment, so he's competing for that."

"Babar's strike-rate of 129.81 in T20I cricket is inferior to Fakhar (133.49) and Ayub (138.48) and Hesson admitted the right-hander needs to boost his scoring clip to stay relevant in the shortest format.

"No doubt strike rate is important in T20 cricket but you have to combine it with a vol-



ume of runs," Hesson said. "There's a good reason why our ranking in T20 cricket is as low as it is, because our strike rates from a batting point of view are not high enough. We certainly made some shifts in that last series to play a more expansive game of cricket and probably catch up with the rest of the world, as that is the way the modern game is."