Kuldeep strikes thrice as SA reach 247/6 at close

Guwahati, (UNI)

Kuldeep Yadav starred with the ball as India kept South Africa in check on Day 1 of the second Test at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium. The left-arm spinner claimed crucial wickets, including those of Tristan Stubbs and Ryan Rickelton, helping India maintain control even as the Proteas reached 247 for 6 in 81.5 overs by the close of play.

South Africa had won the toss and elected to bat.

At tea, the visitors were 82 for 1 in 26.5 overs, with Ryan Rickelton unbeaten on 35 and Aiden Markram having been dismissed for 38 by Jasprit Bumrah just before the interval. Extras contributed nine runs, including eight byes and one leg-bye, as the scoring rate stayed modest at 3.06 runs per over.

The post-lunch session saw steady batting from Tristan Stubbs and Temba Bavuma. Stubbs brought up the first boundary of the session off Ravindra Jadeja, lofting it over wide mid-on, and then cleared long-on for a six off Kuldeep Yadav.

Bavuma also found the fence multiple times, including back-to-back fours off Mohammad Siraj and Jadeja. At 44.5 overs, India lost a review when a leg-side strike on Bavuma's pads was deemed sliding down leg, leaving the captain at the crease.

Kuldeep Yadav struck twice in quick succession, removing Stubbs for 49, caught by KL Rahul, and Rickelton for 35, caught by Rishabh Pant. These wickets ensured India stayed in control as South Africa crossed 156 for 2 in 55 overs at lunch.

The final session saw South Africa accelerate again, reaching 200 in 66.3 overs with 17 extras. Wiaan Mulder and Tony de Zorzi found boundaries, but the Indian bowlers struck at regular intervals.

Kuldeep dismissed Mulder for 13, caught by Yashasvi Jaiswal, while Mohammad Siraj broke the 45-run partnership by removing de Zorzi for 28, caught by Pant off a seaming delivery from the second new ball.

By drinks, the Proteas were 206 for 5 in 69 overs, with de Zorzi on 9 and Senuran Muthusamy on 4. After the new ball was taken at 80.3 overs, Siraj and Bumrah bowled tightly, though a few well-timed boundaries came from Muthusamy and de Zorzi. South Africa ended the day at 247 for 6 in 81.5 overs, with Muthusamy unbeaten on 25 and Kyle Verreynne on 1. The innings featured a blend of steady batting and opportunistic shots, with India's bowlers striking at regular intervals to prevent the scoring from getting away.

High jump legend Sotomayor expresses admiration for Neeraj Chopra

New Delhi, (UNI)

Legendry Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor has expressed admiration for India's golden boy Neeraj Chopra saying the latter's exploits have raised the profile of javelin in India to such an extent that he now faces competition from his compatriots.

In an exclusive chat with UNI on the sidelines of the Ekamra Sports Litrature Festival in the national capital on Saturday, Sotomayor, the only high jumper till date to have recorded a leap higher than 8 feet said, ''I admire Indian javelin thrower Neeraj (Chopra). He enjoys respect across Cuba for the sheer level that he has reached. Due to him so many others have taken to the sport (javelin throw) in India to the point that he now has good competition within the country,"

Neeraj Chopra is India's most successful track and field athlete till date. He won the Gold medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020 and followed it with a silver at the Paris Olympics in 2024. Chopra has also won gold at the World Championships and Asian Games besides winning the Diamond League once.

Sotomayor who won the High jump Gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, crossed the 8 feet barrier twice first in 1989, at the Central American and Caribbean Championships in San Juan, Puerto Rico. His second 8 feet plus jump was recorded at Salamanca, Spain in 1993.

The two time World Championship winner appeared upbeat about India's chances in track and field saying "the biggest thing that India has in its favour is its population, more and more children have to take up athletics. That will increase the talent pool significantly and with improving infrastructure champions will be produced."

He spoke about what it takes to become a world champion.

"The champion mindset is about discipline and constant trying, one has to self evaluate and ensure that he improves every day."

He said he looked forward to interacting with young Indian athletes on Sunday and also exploring the country.

"I have a busy agenda. Tomorrow I will be talking to young athletes and sharing my experience with them. If I have time left, I will also like to visit some tourist attractions.

Dutch, American skaters split golds at Speed Skating World Cup in Calgary

Ottawa, (UNI)

Skaters from the Netherlands and the United States split the four golds on offer at the ISU Speed Skating World Cup in Calgary.

After setting the women's 500 meters world record last week in Salt Lake City, the United States, Femke Kok clocked her personal best of one minute and 12.36 seconds to lead a Dutch sweep of the top four places in the women's 1,000m race on Friday. Kok was pleased to clinch her career first 1,000m World Cup gold. "I want to be fast (in the 1,000m), too. A lot of people were thinking I could only skate fast (in the 500m)," said Kok.

"It felt better," she added. "But the last crossing was a little bit difficult with (pairmate Rio Yamada). I doubted, is she going (to cross) in front of me, or is she going to go behind? And then

I decided, okay, I need to cross in front, but I felt a little unsure, and I went into the last corner a little bit messy."

Kok's compatriots Isabel Grevelt and Marrit Fledderus came in second and third with Jutta Leerdam finishing fourth.

Later on Friday, Joy Beune landed another gold for the Netherlands as she snatched the women's 3,000m title with a winning time of 3:54.42. Ragne Wiklund of Norway took the silver on 3:55.25 in front of bronze medal winner Valerie Maltais of Canada. Having reaped three golds in Salt Lake City last week, Jordan Stolz of the United States continued his shining form in Calgary as he held off a strong challenge from Jenning de Boo of the Netherlands to retain the men's 1,000m title. Clocking 1:06.00, Stolz beat de Boo by 0.11 seconds. De boo settled for the silver with the bronze going to his teammate Joep Wennemars, who crossed the line with a time of 1:06.44.

Aus chase down 205, clinch thrilling win over Eng in Perth

Perth, (UNI)

Australia chased down a target of 205 runs to beat England in the first Test at Perth Stadium, riding on spectacular innings from Travid Head (123 off 83 balls) and Marnus Labuschagne (51* off 49 balls).

The win gave the hosts a commanding start to the Ashes series in front of a spectators of 49,983.

England had set a modest target after being bowled out for 164 in their second innings at Tea on Day 2, having scored 172 in their first innings. Scot Boland starred with the ball for Australia, claiming 4/33 in 11.4 overs, while Mitchell Starc and Brendan Doggett took three wickets each. England's lower order had shown resistance, including a 50-run partnership between Gus Atkinson (37) and Brydon Carse (20), but it was not enough to set a challenging total. Australia began the chase aggressively. Head and Jake Weatherald added 50 runs for the first wicket, with Head reaching 50 off just 36 balls and bringing up his century off 69 balls in scintillating fashion.

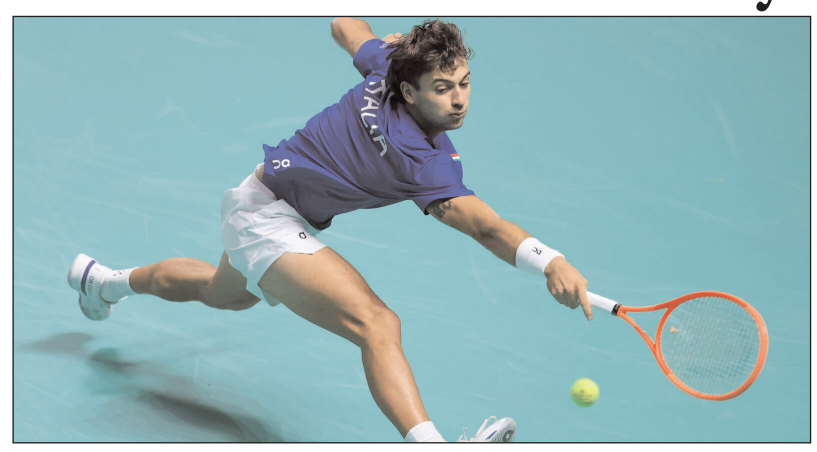
Head's innings included 16 fours and 4 sixes, and he received a standing ovation from the Perth spectators upon his dismissal, caught by Olie Pope off Brydon Carse for 123. Labuschagne complemented Head perfectly, scoring a quick 50 with six fours and a six, keeping Australia in firm control and bringing the scores level with a massive six over long-on.

Davis Cup: Cobolli heroics secure Italy's final return

Bologna, (UNI)

Italy are into the Davis Cup Final for the third consecutive year after Flavio Cobolli saved seven match points and won the most extraordinary 32-point final set tie-break to beat Zizou Bergs and seal a 2-0 victory for his country over Belgium. Cobolli's pulsating 6-3 6-7(5) 7-6(15) win over Bergs in Bologna lasted more than three hours after Matteo Berrettini had earlier set Italy on their way by defeating Raphael Collignon 6-3 6-4.

There were exuberant scenes and celebrations inside the SuperTennis Arena as Cobolli eventually clinched the winning point on his eighth attempt. Cobolli ripped his shirt off having just won the sixth longest tie-break in Davis Cup history. "I asked the team, What's the score in the tiebreak, because I didn't know, I didn't remember",



Cobolli said afterwards.

"I won this match because I believed in myself for three hours today. I think I had a great attitude for all the match. Now I'm a little bit tired, but I'm ready to recover for the final."

His captain, Filippo Volandri, who was put through the wringer on the sidelines, summed up the experience.

"I think this match you only have in Davis Cup", he said. "We saw two great players fight for their country. They both did an unbelievable job. Only one had to win. In the end we did it."

"I told Flavio that he wanted more than the opponent. I don't know if was true or not. In the end this is something unbelievable. I'm really proud about Flavio, proud of course of Matteo, but all the team. The crowd made the difference in the end. We had like 10,500 pushing us through the limit because I think we passed the limit."

Italy has tennis fever right now and Sunday's showpiece, against either Spain or Germany, promises to be a special occasion.

Should they triumph, Italy will become the first country to win three straight Davis Cup titles since the abolition of the Challenge Round in 1971, while it will also be a chance to lift the trophy on home soil for the first time.

BUSINESS

Trade momentum remains firm despite rupee volatility & tariffs

New Delhi, (UNI)

India's total merchandise exports during FY26, Apr-Sep 25 inched up 2.9pc to USD 220 billion (USD 214 billion in H1 FY25), said a State Bank of India (SBI) report on Saturday.

The State Bank of India, a premier multinational private sector bank, said that cumulative exports to the USA also registered a growth of 13pc to USD 45 billion in FY26 Apr-September from USD 40 billion in FY 25 from April-September, though there could be more frontloading effects to the aftermath,

with September figures registering negative YoY growth of 12pc.

"Furthermore, if we look at the share of USA in our exports, it has been declining since July 2025, moving down to 15pc in Sep 25, with marine products (15pc in Sep 25 from 20pc in FY25), precious, semi-precious stones, RMG cotton and cotton fabrics and made up articles exports leading the pack even though Marine products and RMG cotton witnessed positive growth during April-Sept 25," the report said.

Also, the share of India's merchandise exports to other countries during this period has increased significantly, indicating the diversification of our export basket, including the UAE, China, Vietnam, Japan and Hong Kong.

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nigeria are among the top destinations (over FY2025) across different product categories.

SBI noted that the buoyancy in trade talks reaffirms India's desire to come out of the highest (among Asian Peers) tariff structure while enhancing capability building across several loops with recently concluded LPG deals and strategic defence deals last month.

OPPO India redefines the premium smartphone experience with the all-new Find X9 Series

OPPO India today launched the highly anticipated Find X9 Series in India, reiterating its strong ambitions in the premium smartphone segment in India. Continuing Find X legacy, the new series, comprising Find X9 and Find X9 Pro, sets new standards for what flagship smartphones can deliver. The new series presents an exceptional all-round experience, offering a Hasselblad co-engineered new-generation camera system, revolutionary battery life, powerful performance, and the smooth, smart ColorOS 16.

"With the Find X9 Series, OPPO continues to redefine what users can expect from a flagship smartphone," said Peter Dohyung Lee, Head of Product Strategy, OPPO. "India has seen a resurgence in the adoption of premium smartphones by consumers in the last few quarters. As a customer centric brand, we do bring products that align with the needs of the customers. With Find X9 Series, we are introducing a

complete flagship experience that sets a new benchmark for camera experience, design aesthetics, superlative performance and smooth user interface. We are glad to bring in this new chapter in OPPO's journey of providing premium smartphone experience to the customers of India, by virtue of this strongest flagship ever. We are confident with our industry first innovations, Find X9 Series would redefine customer experience and put OPPO at the helm of providing user rich experiences with best value proposition."

The launch comes on the heels of a strong market performance by OPPO in India, where the brand moved up to the second position, with a market share of 13.9%, as per the International Data Corporation 's (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker for Q3 2025. The Find X9 Pro comes in 16GB + 512GB at INR 109999, while the Find X9 is available in 12GB + 256GB and 16GB + 512GB at INR 74999 and INR 84999, respectively. Both variants will be available for sale from November 21. The Find X9 Pro will be available on the OPPO e-store, Amazon, Flipkart and across mainline retail outlets. The Find X9 will be available on the OPPO e-store, Flipkart, and mainline retail outlets. The Hasselblad Teleconverter Kit will be available at an additional price of INR 29,999 and will be available on the OPPO e-store.

NITI Aayog andJanaagraha launch the City Data and Analytics Platform (CDAP) to strengthen data-driven urban development

Bhopal: NITI Aayog, in collaboration with Janaagraha, launched the City Data and Analytics Platform (CDAP), an integrated platform for urban data in India, on 20 November. A microsite on NITI Aayog's National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP), CDAP aims to catalyse data-driven urban policy making in India.

The CDAP platform can be accessed here:https://www.citydata.org.in/

CDAP was launched by Anurag Jain, Chief Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh, during the inaugural session of NITI

Aayog's Data Forum 2025, held in Bhopal. The event began with an opening address byAnna Roy, Principal Economic Advisor and Programme Director, NITI Aayog. Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha introduced the platform. ThomasDanielewitz, Senior Economist, World Bank, and Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Additional Chief Secretary (General Administration Department), Government of Madhya Pradesh were also present during the inauguration. Attendees also included senior state officials, central government representatives, academia, researchers, and international experts.

India's urban population is expected to grow to over 800 million by 2050. The urban contribution to GDP, which currently stands at 63%, is also expected to rise to 75% by 2040.

To realise the full potential of India's cities and ensure quality of life for citizens, targeted reforms anchored in reliable, verified, and integrated datasets are essential.

Currently, data on cities is maintained in siloes across various departments, urban local governments, and parastatals.

Afghan commerce minister calls for bolstering trade and sectoral cooperation with India

New Delhi, (UNI)

Afghan Commerce Minister Alhaj Noorudin Azizi on Friday extended an open invitation to Indian businesses to participate in sectors such as mining, agriculture, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, IT, energy and textiles.

Azizi also expressed his heartfelt appreciation for India's longstanding support of Afghanistan, especially in challenging times.

He also announced several new initiatives, including a 1 per cent tariff on raw materials and machinery, free land allocations, a reliable power supply, and five-year tax exemptions for new industries, particularly those established by Afghan refugees. While addressing a joint session at PHDCCI here, the commerce minister also urged greater engagement from the Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities. He reaffirmed Afghanistan's commitment to ensuring a peaceful, inclusive, and business-friendly environment for all partners. Also, M. Anand Prakash, Joint

Secretary (PAI) of the Ministry of External Affairs, highlighted recent developments that will boost trade, including the activation of air freight corridors between Kabul and major Indian cities, which are poised to begin cargo operations soon.

He also underscored the deep civilisational ties between the two nations and announced the reactivation of the Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce, and Investment.