



King Kohli ROARS BACK

Batting maestro Virat Kohli wound back the clock with a sensational masterclass against Australia in the first Test on Sunday, but it was Yashasvi Jaiswal who showed the world what the next decade of Indian batsmanship might look like. Australia trail by 522 runs on day three in Perth, crumbling to 12-3 at stumps after India piled on 487-6 declared, courtesy of 161 from Jaiswal and 100 not out from Kohli.

- Star Indian batter Virat Kohli's unbeaten 143-ball 100 yesterday was his 10th century across formats in Australia, the most by a visiting batter.
- It was also Kohli's seventh Test hundred in Australia -- tied for second-most by a visiting batter with English batter Wally Hammond in the land down under. England's Jack Hobbs holds the record for most Test centuries (9) by an overseas batter in Australia.
- Kohli is also tied with Sunil Gavaskar in terms of most Test hundreds in an away country. Gavaskar scored seven Test tons in the Windies.
- After being bundled out for 150 in the first innings, India piled up a mammoth 487/6d in the second innings. The 337-run improvement is the second-biggest for India in Tests, coming right after the Headingley Test in 1967 against England in which India saw an improvement of 346 runs between their first innings score of 164 and a second innings score of 510.
- Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul's 201-run opening stand is the highest for India in Australia, eclipsing the previous best -- a 191-run opening stand -- set by Sunil Gavaskar and Kris Srikkanth in Sydney in 1986.

"I'm not a guy who hangs around for the sake of it. I take pride in performing for the country,"

said Kohli after hitting his 30th Test century.

"I think it's just about the batters sticking to their plans tomorrow, batting some time. And if some guys find some form and score 80, 90 or 100, that's probably the positives we can take out of it,"

said Australian speedster Josh Hazlewood on what Australia now expect from the game.

Dhaka beat Rajshahi inside two days in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacer Anamul Haque completed his second five-for to help Dhaka Division clinch victory by an innings and 11 runs against Rajshahi Division inside two days during their sixth round match of the National Cricket League at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura yesterday.

Anamul finished with 5-54 in Rajshahi's second innings to take his tally to 32 in the ongoing season, while another pacer, Ripon Mondol, claimed 3-20 to bowl their opponents for 128 to move to second spot in the league table with 25 points.

Resuming on overnight score of 18-1, Rajshahi batters could survive only 24 overs on Day Two. They had scored only 42 runs in their first innings before Dhaka, in reply, made 181 runs on Day One.

At the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, fifties from Amite Hasan (56), Mubin Ahmed (53) and Nasum Ahmed (53) helped league leaders Sylhet Division reach 217 for six in reply to Barishal



Division's first innings total of 304 runs.

Earlier, Barishal added 46 runs to their overnight score of 258-7. For Sylhet, pacer Rejaur Rahman Raja finished with 5-69, his third five-for in first-class cricket.

At the other Sylhet venue, Khulna took a 40-run lead after reaching 56-1 at stumps in their second innings against Chattogram Division.

Earlier, Chattogram, who had resumed on 31 without loss, saw opener Parvez Hossain Emon make a brilliant 107 off 139 balls -- his maiden first-class ton -- while Irfan Sukkur scored 40 before Chattogram posted 220 runs to take a narrow 16-run lead in the first innings.

For Khulna, pacer Mehedi Hasan Rana, who was playing his first first-class game after more than two years, claimed 5-65 while another pacer, Masum Khan Tutul, finished with 4-32.

At Cox's Bazar Academy Ground, Mohammad Naim struck a career-best 180 off 285 balls while Marshall Ayub made 61 as Dhaka Metro scored a massive 475 runs in their first innings against Rangpur Division after resuming on 276-2.

Rangpur lost both openers in the first over to pacer Mehedi Hasan before finishing the day at 32-2.

Rodri is a great footballer... he deserves a Ballon d'Or, but not this year. This year they rewarded him for his performance last season... he deserved to win last year, when he won the treble with Manchester City,

Real Madrid chief Florentino Perez railed against the Ballon d'Or voting and organisers during Los Blancos' annual general meeting on Sunday, in which he also lashed out at European and world football governing bodies UEFA and FIFA.



Zimbabwe stun Pakistan in ODI series opener

REUTERS

Zimbabwe upset Pakistan in the opening clash of their three-match One Day International series, winning by 80 runs on the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern system at Queens Sports Club on Sunday.

The home side, put into bat, were in trouble at 125-7 halfway through their innings before Pakistan-born Sikandar Raza (39) and left-handed tailender Richard Ngarava (48) put on 62 runs for the eighth wicket to help Zimbabwe to 205 before they were bowled out with nine overs left.



Debutant left arm wrist spinner Faisal Akram took 3-24 while offspinner Salman Agha returned figures of 3-42.

Zimbabwe quick Blessing Muzarabani removed Pakistan's openers cheaply and the wickets continued to tumble in a feeble batting display as they slumped to 60-6 off 21 overs before heavy rain arrived.

The two teams meet again in Bulawayo on Tuesday and Thursday.

IPL auction records tumble in Jeddah

AFP, Riyadh

Indian wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant became the most expensive player in Indian Premier League history Sunday when he sold for a record \$3.2 million, as teams splashed out on world-class cricketers for the lucrative Twenty20 tournament.

A total of 577 players are up for grabs at the two-day auction in Jeddah, with Pant, England veteran James Anderson and New Zealand all-rounder Rachin Ravindra among the top names.

The 2023 record of 247.5 million rupees Kolkata paid to Australian Mitchell Star was first breached by Punjab Kings, who the IPL said snapped up Shreyas Iyer for a "handsome" 267.5 million rupees (\$3.17 million).

Iyer, 29, captained Kolkata Knight Riders to their third IPL crown this year. But that record rapidly tumbled.

The IPL reported Lucknow Super Giants paid a "gigantic" 270 million rupees for 27-year-old star keeper Rishabh Pant.

The auction started on a sizzling note when Indian quick Arshdeep Singh's name began a bidding war, which ended with Punjab getting the left-arm pace bowler for \$2.13 million.

This year, Australian left-arm quick Star was not retained by Kolkata -- and went to Delhi Capitals for \$1.39 million.

Gujarat Titans paid \$1.87 million for England white-ball skipper Jos Buttler,



IPL 2025 TOP 10 BUYS

- Rishabh Pant to Lucknow, Rs 27 cr
- Shreyas Iyer to Punjab, Rs 26.75 cr
- Venkatesh Iyer to Kolkata, Rs 23.75 cr
- Arshdeep Singh to Punjab, Rs 18 cr
- Yuzvendra Chahal to Punjab, Rs 18 cr
- Jos Buttler to Gujarat, Rs 15.75 cr
- KL Rahul to Delhi, Rs 14 cr
- Josh Hazlewood to Bengaluru, Rs 12.50 cr
- Jofra Archer to Rajasthan, Rs 12.50 cr
- Trent Boult to Mumbai, Rs 12.50 cr

while India pace bowler Mohammed Shami went to Sunrisers Hyderabad for \$1.18 million.

Shami, 34, has recovered from a foot injury and is expected to join the Test team in the ongoing series in Australia.

Before bidding began, Rajasthan Royals coach Rahul Dravid said managers had done the groundwork but bidding on the day meant nothing could be taken for granted.

"You can prepare... you have a lot of discussions around the players and the tactics that you might employ," Dravid said, according to the IPL.

"But being realistic, you have to be able to think on your feet a little bit."

Punjab Kings coach Ricky Ponting, the former Australia skipper, said there was "huge excitement" but keeping cool during the bidding was critical.

"I think being really really calm, and really clear, at the auction table is a really important thing," Ponting said.

The IPL has generated billions in revenue since its inception in 2008, turning the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) into one of the richest governing bodies in sport.

In June 2022 it sold the broadcast rights for five IPL seasons to global media giants for \$6.2 billion.

Dates for next year's IPL have not been released but seasons usually run from March to May.

A dip or deeper decline?

AFP, Manchester

Pep Guardiola said he expected a slip in Manchester City's standards sooner or later but even he has been shocked by the English champions' implosion in a five-game losing streak.

After losing four consecutive matches for the first time in his decorated managerial career, Guardiola backed himself to turn the situation around by signing a two-year extension to his contract on Thursday.

Just 48 hours later, the positivity that deal created was punctured as City were humbled 4-0 by Tottenham to lose at



home for the first time in 52 matches.

A side that has created history by winning an unprecedented four Premier League titles is now caught in a negative spiral.

Guardiola conceded his star-studded squad are "fragile" and low on confidence after a run that also included defeats to Bournemouth and Brighton, either side of a 4-1 Champions League thrashing by Sporting Lisbon.

"Being here for eight years, I knew that sooner or later we would drop," said the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss.

There remains plenty of time in the season for Guardiola's men to arrest their decline.

However, there are serious questions whether they have the personnel or physical capacity to do so after years of

going deep into the well every season.

Before kick-off against Tottenham, Rodri was welcomed back to the Etihad for the first time since winning the Ballon d'Or, awarded to the world's best player over the previous year.

It was once the action began that City really showed just how fundamental he has been to their success in recent years.

Rodri suffered a season-ending knee injury in September's 2-2 draw against Arsenal and City's title aspirations looked to have disappeared with him.

Since the start of last season, City have lost once in 53 matches with Rodri and nine in 25 without.

Kevin De Bruyne made his return from a two-month injury layoff in the closing stages against Spurs but at 33 is now regularly sidelined by fitness issues.

And the pace that made captain Kyle Walker one of the Premier League's finest ever right-backs is now beginning to fade as Timo Werner tore past the England defender to set up Brennan Johnson's fourth goal for Tottenham.

The decision to sell Julian Alvarez to Atletico Madrid for £82 million (\$103 million) and not replace the Argentine looks increasingly misguided.

There is little back up to Erling Haaland as a goal threat. The Norwegian has carried the burden with 15 goals, while no one else has more than three.

Worse could be to come as City travel to Premier League leaders Liverpool next weekend.

Verstappen 'never thought' he'd win four world titles

AFP, Las Vegas

Max Verstappen admitted he "never thought" he would win four world titles after wrapping up the 2024 Formula One championship under the Las Vegas lights.

Verstappen's success ushered him into an elite club alongside Juan Manuel Fangio, Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel, Lewis Hamilton and Alain Prost as a four-time champion.

Seven wins in the opening 10 races launched Verstappen to this success, but he needed to overcome a mid-season run of ten without a win before victory in a rain-hit race in Brazil set up his fourth title.

"At 17, I was just happy to be there and dreaming of potential victories and standing on the podium, just normal things that are already very difficult to achieve," said the Dutchman whose fifth-place race finish in Las Vegas was enough to guarantee the title.

"It was a very challenging season and for me also as a person at times it was very challenging and I had to be calm. In a way I still prefer last season, I enjoyed it a lot, but I think this season it

has taught me a lot of lessons.

"I am very proud of us as a team and in a way that makes it a very special and beautiful season. It's been so competitive this time. A special season. A beautiful season."

Verstappen also ruled out speculation that he may leave Red Bull, the team which has nurtured his talent and taken him to the top of the sport.

"For me, I'm just very proud to be part of the team and we are now celebrating our fourth world title together. There's nothing else on my mind."

Verstappen has been on top of the world championship in an unbroken run since the Spanish Grand Prix in 2022.

"It's incredible, he's done an amazing job,"

said Red Bull team chief Christian Horner. "He's been outstanding all year and we are just very proud of him."

"He's won eight Grand Prix and the championship with two races to spare and you can't ask for more than that."

Norris, who pushed Verstappen to the limit in the second half of the season, was sixth in the race, a place behind his rival.

