

India eye special performance to conquer 'street-smart' England

Bowling coach urges special effort to keep India's home title dream alive

● India face England semi-final

● Third straight semi-final meeting

● Samson's knock revived campaign

AFP | Mumbai

India will need a "special performance" to beat a "street-smart" England in their T20 World Cup semi-final in Mumbai, bowling coach Morne Morkel warned yesterday.

Sanju Samson's sparkling 97 not out enabled India to chase down 196 against the West Indies in a winner-takes-all clash on Sunday in Kolkata.

Morne said India would again need someone "to put their hand up" against Harry Brook's side on Thursday night to keep the nation's dream of a home World Cup win alive.

Morkel agreed India had not put together a flawless display in the tournament yet, but said that did not matter.

"We haven't really spoken about the perfect game," Morne told reporters at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium after India's final training session before Thursday's big clash.



India's Sanju Samson (L) and captain Suryakumar Yadav run between the wickets

"It's not about how you get to the semi-finals. It's about the next two games, how we're going to play there.

"I think the quality of this team has been shown that on the day somebody will put their hand up.

"Then hopefully, especially tomorrow night, we can put that special performance in."

It is the third T20 World Cup in a row that India will play England in the semi-finals.

Both previous times the winners went on to lift the trophy.

In 2022, England crushed India by 10 wickets in Adelaide and beat Pakistan in the Melbourne final.

Two years ago India won in Guyana by a similarly dominant

68 runs before downing South Africa in Barbados.

This time, though, India will have the backing of 35,000 fiercely partisan fans in Mumbai.

"It's a big occasion tomorrow night here, a semi-final, a great stadium to play a great game of cricket," said Morkel.

"So hopefully the boys can rock up tomorrow and just be



calm and execute those skills."

India are leaving nothing to chance in their preparations.

Training on Tuesday night was delayed by an hour so it did not coincide with a lunar eclipse, which is considered unlucky in India.

"I was told about the lunar eclipse and the session was pushed backwards," admitted Morkel.

"I think the most important thing to focus on was the quality the guys put in at training, which was great to see."

India hosted the T20 World Cup in 2016 and lost in a Mumbai semi-final to eventual champions the West Indies.

India are wary of the threat posed by England, who were shaky in the group phase but

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MORNE MORKEL

powered through the Super Eights with wins over Sri Lanka, Pakistan and New Zealand.

"They're a team that's street smart. Obviously there's a lot of quality in their side," said Morkel.

"Their batting is deep, which makes them a very dangerous side. With the ball, they've got a lot of attacking options.

"The way they approach a T20 game, fearless, trying to take the game on, will give you opportunities.

"Tomorrow is going to be a good shoot-out between two aggressive teams."

South Africa play New Zealand in the first semi-final later yesterday.

'Vast majority' of players in Dubai have left UAE, says ATP



Daniil Medvedev reacts during his men's singles semi-final match (file photo)

AFP | Paris

The "vast majority" of players who were stranded in Dubai following last week's men's tennis tournament in the emirate have been able to leave the UAE, the ATP announced yesterday.

Several high-profile players, including champion Daniil Medvedev, were unable to leave the country following the start of Israel and the United States' war with Iran.

"The vast majority of players who were in Dubai have successfully departed today on selected flights," the ATP said.

"The safety and wellbeing of our players, support

teams and staff members remains our highest priority, and we continue to remain in close contact with those affected."

Russian media reports said Medvedev and his compatriots Andrey Rublev and Karen Khachanov had been able to leave Dubai via Oman on Tuesday.

They were then due to head to Istanbul before flying to the United States, where the ATP/WTA 1000 Indian Wells tournament starts.

As all three players are seeded for that event they will not play until the second round, which runs Friday and Saturday.

Allen's 33-ball hundred powers New Zealand into T20 World Cup final

AFP | Kolkata

Finn Allen smashed a blistering unbeaten century as New Zealand stormed into the T20 World Cup final with a nine-wicket thrashing of South Africa at Eden Gardens yesterday.

Chasing 170, Allen hammered 100 not out off just 33 balls, with 10 fours and eight sixes, to rocket New Zealand to 173-1 in only 12.5 overs after a 117-run opening stand with Tim Seifert. Seifert cracked 58 off 33 balls before falling to Kagiso Rabada, leaving Rachin Ravindra (13 not out) to complete a ruthless chase that underlined New Zealand's dominance.

Earlier, South Africa recovered from 77-5 to post 169-8

Scorecard

South Africa 169-8 in 20 overs (Marco Jansen 55 not out, Tristan Stubbs 29; Matt Henry 2-7; Rachin Ravindra 2-7); New Zealand 173-1 in 12.5 overs (Finn Allen 100 not out, Tim Seifert 58, Rachin Ravindra 13 not out).



New Zealand's Finn Allen plays a shot

thanks to a counter-attacking 55 not out from 30 balls by all-rounder Marco Jansen, who struck two fours and five sixes. Tristan Stubbs contributed 29 off 24 balls, but New Zealand's varied attack, led by Matt Henry

and Rachin Ravindra with two wickets each, kept the innings in check after early strikes.

New Zealand, who elected to field, blew away the target in a ferocious Powerplay, racing to 84-0 in six overs and never

loosening their grip on a shell-shocked South African side still chasing a first global title. Allen was named player of the match for his explosive hundred as New Zealand advanced to the showpiece game.