

# Aussies level India series

Australia register their first win in the longest format since ball-tampering scandal

● **Tim Paine's 'new Australian team' proves its capability to produce right results after victory in second Test**

● **Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc blow away lower order taking three wickets apiece**

AFP | Perth, Australia

Australia captain Tim Paine was a relieved man after his team beat India by 146 runs in Perth yesterday to level the series with their first Test win since the ball-tampering 'sandpapergate' scandal that rocked international cricket.

Set 287 to win, India resumed at 115 for five on the final day and never threatened to pull off a miraculous victory, losing their last five wickets for just 21 runs.

India were dismissed for 140, with spinner Nathan Lyon claiming 3-39 to finish with eight wickets for the match and guide the home team to a drought-breaking success, their first in seven Tests spanning almost 10 months.

It was Paine's first Test win in five matches since taking over from the suspended Steve Smith in South Africa, and also the first victory for new coach Justin Langer, coming in his hometown.

Paine, who was involved in a verbal spat with Indian counterpart Virat Kohli on the third and fourth days, said the overwhelming emotion was relief at finally being able to put a dark peri-



Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho leaves the pitch following the UEFA Champions League group H football match between Manchester United and Young Boys (file photo)

od in Australian cricket behind them.

"I'm relieved personally," he said.

"It's been hard work -- the first two Tests of this series have been really tough.

"We've got some inexperienced players in terms of Test matches played, to get a win like that against the best Test team in the world is going to give them a huge boost of confidence."

#### Kohli defends selections

Kohli defended his side's decision to play four fast bowlers instead of picking Ravindra Jadeja to replace injured spinner Ravi Ashwin.

Despite the lively and at times unpredictable wicket, Kohli said the Indians were confident they could chase down the target, but paid credit to the Australian bowlers.

"We had the belief we could do it," he said.

"They were more relentless and got the balls in the right areas for long enough."

Both captains played down the on-field banter during the match, saying it never crossed the line of what was acceptable.

Australia's previous Test win was against South Africa at St George's Park in March.

It was during the following Test at Newlands that Camer-



**In March, the men's Australian team was involved in a ball-tampering scandal during and after the third Test match against South Africa in Cape Town**

on Bancroft was caught using sandpaper to alter the ball and Australian cricket was plunged into turmoil.

The scandal led to lengthy suspensions from Cricket Australia for Bancroft, Smith and opener David Warner and saw Paine appointed as skipper just months after being recalled to the side.

Australia's best result in the four previous Tests since the scandal was narrowly hanging on for a draw against Pakistan in Dubai.

They had also won only six of 22 one-day internationals and Twenty20 matches since the scandal.

Paine praised the efforts of

Australia 1st innings 326 (M. Harris 70, T. Head 58; Sharma 4-41)	
India 1st innings 283 (V Kohli 123, A Rahane 51; Lyon 5-67)	
Australia 2nd innings 243 (Khawaja 72; Shami 6-56)	
<b>India 2nd innings</b>	
KL Rahul b Starc	0
M. Vijay b Lyon	20
C. Pujara c Paine b Hazlewood	4
V. Kohli c Khawaja b Lyon	17
A. Rahane c Head b Hazlewood	30
H. Vihari c Harris b Starc	28
R. Pant c Handscomb b Lyon	30
U. Yadav c and b Starc	2
I. Sharma c Paine b Cummins	0
M. Shami not out	0
J. Bumrah c and b Cummins	0
Extras (b6, w3)	9
Total (all out, 56 overs)	140
Australia won by 146 runs	
Series level 1-1	

openers Aaron Finch and Marcus Harris on the first day, saying their century partnership was critical to the final result, and lauded the growing leadership of Lyon.

He said he expected Finch, who split an index finger while batting in the second innings, to be fit for the third Test in Melbourne in eight days.

Having already lost first innings centurion Kohli for 17 on the fourth day, India's hope rested on overnight batsmen Hanuma Vihari and Rishabh Pant.

However, Vihari added just four to his overnight score and fell to Mitchell Starc, who took 3-46, for 28.

The right-hander tried to flick the ball through the leg side, ballooned a simple catch to Harris at midwicket and the last four wickets followed quickly.

The last man to fall was Jasprit Bumrah, who went for a big shot but only succeeded in skying a chance back to bowler Pat Cummins.

## Messi claims record fifth Golden Shoe

AFP | Barcelona, Spain

Lionel Messi collected a record fifth Golden Shoe award yesterday for finishing last season as the top goalscorer in Europe.

The striker scored 34 goals in 68 games for Barcelona, putting him ahead of Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Tottenham's Harry Kane.

Cristiano Ronaldo, who has won the award four times, hit 26 goals in 52 matches for Real Madrid.

After being presented with his latest prize in Barcelona, Messi said: "The truth is I had no idea this would happen when I started. I dreamt of playing professional football and enjoying success, I love the game, but I never imagined I would have so much.

"I enjoy the work, the ef-



Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi poses with his five Golden Shoe awards

fort, I'm at the best team in the world and play with the best team-mates in the world, so everything is easier."

The ceremony was attended by Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu, as well as fellow players like Sergio Busquets and Sergi Roberto.

Messi also discussed Monday's Champions League draw, which pitted Barca against Lyon in the round of 16.

"Lyon will be a complicated opponent," Messi said. "Even if they are not known as one of the strongest teams, they are dangerous as they showed against

Manchester City, one of the best teams in the world.

"It will be difficult to go through, but the opportunity is there for us. We have several Frenchmen in the team like Samuel Umtiti and Malcom, who played in France, so perhaps they can help as well."

## India hits out at sledging war claims during Test

AFP | Perth, Australia

India yesterday slammed "baseless" reports of a sledging showdown between rival captains Tim Paine and Virat Kohli during the second Australia-India Test.

The Indian team management strongly denied reports that Kohli had belittled Paine as just "a stand-in captain". Both skippers were warned by umpire Chris Gaffaney during the game which Australia won by 146 runs.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said: "It is 'assumed' that Kohli said, 'I am the best player in the world and you are just a stand-in

captain'.

"These claims were based on hearsay and the BCCI would like to bring into notice that no such words were spoken on the field by Indian captain."

It added: "The BCCI got a clarification from the team management about the incident and would like to classify the reports as baseless."

Australia's win was their first in a Test since a ball-tampering scandal in March, which triggered a damning review of a win-at-all-costs team culture.

Exchanges between Kohli and Paine were picked up by stump microphones and prompted Gaffaney's call to "play the game".



Virat Kohli of India and Tim Paine of Australia bump into each other

# 34

goals were scored by Lionel Messi in 68 games for Barcelona, putting him ahead of Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Tottenham's Harry Kane