

## Root, Kohli fear pink ball twilight collapse



India's Virat Kohli helps England's Joe Root who is struggled with cramps on Day 1 of the first Test in Chennai

AFP | Ahmedabad

England captain Joe Root and India skipper Virat Kohli have both warned of the challenges of playing during the twilight zone in day-night Tests -- when batting collapses can happen -- ahead of their third Test clash starting today.

The match will be the first time that India and England -- level at 1-1 in the four-match series -- face each other in a day-night encounter.

"It's much more challenging to play with the pink ball regardless of what pitch you are playing on," Kohli said on the eve of the match in the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

"And especially in the evening, if, as a batting team, you are starting your innings under lights, then that one-and-a-half hour is challenging," Kohli told reporters.

"When it starts to get dark, especially during that twilight period, it gets very tricky. Light changes, it's difficult to sight



**Both teams have had painful experiences of pink-ball cricket. India were bowled out for 36 by Australia in Adelaide in December and New Zealand skittled England in Auckland for 58 in 2018**

the ball and under lights is like playing the first session in the morning in a normal Test match. The ball tends to swing a lot."

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# Bahrain praised for 'fantastic job' in qualifiers

National team head coach Sam Vincent hails players, looks forward to getting ready for FIBA Asia Cup 2021

● **Bahrain and Lebanon have qualified from Group D**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain head coach Sam Vincent praised the national team's players for their "fantastic job" in securing a berth in the FIBA Asia Cup 2021, taking place later this year in August.

The Bahrainis completed their qualifying campaign on Monday night with a hard-earned victory over Iraq, giving them an impressive 4-2 win-loss record in a highly competitive group that also featured Lebanon and India.

Bahrain are the lowest-ranked team among the quartet, currently placed 107th on the FIBA World Ranking. Lebanon are 58th, India 73rd and Iraq are 77th.

But the nationals showed what they are capable of, and Vincent was pleased with their overall performance in qualification.

"The guys did a fantastic job," Vincent said during his post-game Press conference following their win over the Iraqis. "We were able to finish 4-2 in a very competitive pool."



Bahrain head coach Sam Vincent during his Press conference after their win over Iraq

Bahrain's two losses were against their Lebanese counterparts, the first of which was a 43-point blowout in Beirut last year. But the Bahrainis put up a better challenge in the return game this past week, which was an improvement, said Vincent. The 1986 NBA title-winning former point guard is now aiming to build on that growth ahead of this year's continental showcase.

"The first game we lost to Lebanon, we didn't really play well there but we came back and played much better in the game here in Bahrain; had a chance to win that game," he said.

"And then we beat two tough teams: India, ranked much

## 107th

is the FIBA World Ranking of Bahrain, which is the lowest amongst all the Group D teams in the FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers. Lebanon are 58th, India 73rd and Iraq are 77th

higher, and Iraq, ranked much higher.

"So we feel pretty confident especially playing without some of our key players like Muzamil [Ameer]. We did a pretty good job.

"We want to continue to improve and get ready for the

” We were able to finish 4-2 in a very competitive pool. We want to continue to improve and get ready for the FIBA Asia Cup, and that's what we'll be focused on in our next camps

BAHRAIN HEAD COACH SAM VINCENT

FIBA Asia Cup, and that's what we'll be focused on in our next camps."

This year's FIBA Asia Cup will mark the 30th edition of the continent's leading basketball championship. It is currently scheduled to be held from August 16 to 28 in Indonesia, with 16 national teams in the fray. Both Bahrain and Lebanon have qualified from Group D, while India still have a chance but must play in another tournament to claim one of four remaining berths.

Bahrain have appeared in the Cup, originally known as the Asian Basketball Championship, eight times in the past, including in 1977, 1979, 1987, 1991, 1997, 1999, 2011 and 2013. The Bahrainis' best finish was 10th in the 1999 competition hosted by Saudi Arabia.

## Pogacar in control after UAE Tour climb stage win

AFP | Dubai

UAE Emirates rider Tadej Pogacar took a major step towards victory in his team's home cycling Tour winning the first climbing stage yesterday to strengthen his hold on the overall lead.

The Tour de France champion had already started the day in the leader's red jersey and finished it by beating last year's UAE Tour winner Adam Yates.

Yates, the Ineos team leader this week, now sits second, 43sec behind with one more climb stage to overhaul the on form Slovenian.

"The UAE Tour is not won overall yet. A lot can happen in the last four stages," Pogacar said on the winning line.

"We wanted a win and we got one. It was a really tough day and kind of stressful," he said mentioning the crosswind that caused breaks in the main group on the flat exposed sections of the ride.

"It was super hard but I'm super happy to win," said the 22-year-old who had his image emblazoned on the tallest building in the world the Buj Khalifa tower in Dubai after his win in September on the 2020 Tour de France.

But Yates truly took the battle to Pogacar with a series of blistering accelerations on the



UAE Team Emirates' Slovenian cyclist Tadej Pogacar celebrates upon crossing the finish line

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TADEJ POGACAR

way up the 10km 5.4 percent gradient Jebel Hafeet summit finish climb.

Only Pogacar managed to follow Yates as the other contenders, chiefly the brilliant

Portuguese rookie Joao Almeida dropped away with Yates' relentless attacking.

But under immense pressure to win this Tour Pogacar refused Yates' pleas to launch a joint bid to distance the others.

Instead, from a position of strength he sat on Yates' wheel and then skipped away from him over the final 400m.

The Briton almost overhauled him on the line and the pair finished on the same time of 3hrs 58min 35sec.

Almeida and the chasing group crossed the line 48 seconds off the pace, leaving the Quick-Step man in third overall at 1min 03sec.

## Unseeded Rogers stuns third seed Konta in Adelaide

AFP | Adelaide

Unseeded American Shelby Rogers stunned third seed Johanna Konta with a display of raw power in the second round of the Adelaide International yesterday.

Rogers served superbly and was ruthless with her returns to see off the British star 6-2, 6-2 in just 76 minutes.

The 28-year-old Rogers has been in good form in Australia, reaching the fourth round of the Australian Open last week before falling to world number one Ashleigh Barty.

She broke Konta's first service game and was never troubled after that, breaking the former world number four twice in each set to run out a comfortable winner.

"I started the match really well with a quick break and I just kept the momentum going," Rogers said.

"I knew I had to bring my best game tonight for Jo because she's got an incredible game.

"She can pretty much serve you off the court when she wants to, so I was very happy with my return game tonight."

There were no problems for the three other seeded players in action, all playing their first round matches.

Fifth seeded Pole Iga Swi-



Shelby Rogers hits a return

” **YOU KNOW WHAT**

**Shelby Rogers has been in good form in Australia, reaching the fourth round of the Australian Open last week before falling to world number one Ashleigh Barty**

atek, Petra Martic, the sixth seed from Croatia, and seventh ranked Yulia Putintseva all pro-

gressed.

French Open champion Swiatek beat American Madison Brengle 6-3, 6-4 and will now play Maddison Inglis in the second round after the Australian qualifier downed countrywoman Samantha Stosur.

Martic came back from losing the first set to Russia's Liudmila Samsonova to win 4-6, 6-0, 7-5, while Putintseva beat Laura Siegemund in straight sets 6-4, 6-4.

Martic next plays American qualifier Cori Gauff, a 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 winner over Italy's Jasmine Paolini, while Putintseva takes on Storm Sanders, who stunned fellow Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 6-1, 6-2 in just 63 minutes.