

India eye special performance to conquer England

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 on Wednesday. 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. “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.



MUMBAI: India’s Rinku Singh (L) listens to coach Gautam Gambhir (R) during a training session ahead of the 2026 ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup’s semi-final match between India and England at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on March 4, 2026. — AFP

“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 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 on Wednesday. — AFP