

# S Africa, India eye T20 WCup rematch as semifinals begin

## South Africa only team to have won all seven of their matches so far

**MUMBAI:** Unbeaten South Africa continue their quest for a maiden World Cup title in the first semifinal of the T20 World Cup against New Zealand in Kolkata on Wednesday, with a potential repeat of the 2024 final against India awaiting.

Should Aiden Markram's side inflict their second defeat of the tournament on New Zealand - they beat them comfortably in the group stage - then a rematch against India for the trophy could be on the cards.

Suryakumar Yadav's defending champions will first have to get past Harry Brook's England in Mumbai on Thursday - a blockbuster clash that is being talked about excitedly across the cricket-mad city.

But South Africa are unbeaten and are a team on the up after decades of gaining a reputation for "choking" on the big stage. They finally won their first global cricket trophy when they lifted the World Test Championship last year, and eight members of that side are in the T20 World Cup squad.

South Africa have been strong in all departments and appear to have the form to break their white-ball duck after their agonizing final defeat to India two years ago. Chasing 177 in Barbados, South Africa had one hand on the trophy with 26 needed from the last four overs with six wickets in hand.

But a dramatic mini-collapse saw them finish on 169-8 as India won by seven runs. Markram has led from the front, scoring 86 not out in a seven-wicket romp past semifinal opponents New

Zealand in the group phase, easily chasing 176 with 17 balls to spare.

South Africa are the only team to have won all seven of their matches so far. While they topped their Super Eight table, beating India and the West Indies en route, Mitchell Santner's New Zealand lost to England and had to rely on run rate to squeeze ahead of Pakistan and into the final four.

England won all three of their Super Eight matches and appear ominously to be growing into the tournament. Captain Brook has begun to stamp his authority on the side, moving up to bat at number three and scoring a sparkling century to lead a successful chase of 165 against Pakistan.

England played two of their group games in Mumbai, so will be familiar with the conditions, despite having all their Super Eight matches on turning tracks in Sri Lanka. India played their first match of the tournament at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium when they were in deep trouble at 77-6 against the USA until Suryakumar's 84 dragged them to a winning total.

They not only have the expectations of 35,000 cricket-obsessed fans in a packed Wankhede stadium, and hundreds of millions more watching on TV to withstand, but also the weight of history.

India, the world's top-ranked T20 team, are attempting to become the first to win back-to-back T20 World Cups and the first to lift the trophy on home soil. After losing against South Africa in the first match of the Super Eights, India have played their best cricket with their backs to the wall.

In must-win games they blasted 256 against



**KOLKATA:** New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson (C) attends a training session on the eve of their 2026 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup semifinal match against South Africa at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on March 3, 2026. — AFP

Zimbabwe, then chased 196 against the West Indies on Sunday on the back of Sanju Samson's 97 not out. South Africa are hot favourites to be

the first team into Sunday's final in Ahmedabad, but England will be out to break a billion Indian hearts. — AFP