

# India vs New Zealand 1st ODI 2026: India Announces Playing XI, Wins Toss and Elects to Bowl First; Fans Unhappy as Arshdeep Singh Benched



The India vs New Zealand 1st ODI 2026 began with high expectations, but the spotlight quickly shifted to India's team selection. After winning the toss, **Team India elected to bowl first**, a decision that seemed tactical on a fresh pitch. However, fans were left disappointed as **Arshdeep Singh was benched**, with **Prasidh Krishna and Harshit Rana** getting the nod instead.

## India Wins Toss and Chooses to Bowl

Captain Rohit Sharma won the toss and opted to bowl, citing favorable early conditions for fast bowlers. With some moisture in the pitch and overcast skies, the decision made sense from a tactical standpoint.

India aimed to:

- Exploit early swing and bounce
- Put pressure on New Zealand's top order
- Chase a target under clearer conditions

The move reflected India's confidence in their bowling unit, especially in the powerplay overs.

## India's Playing XI for the 1st ODI

Here is the **India Playing XI** for the opening match:

- Rohit Sharma (C)
- Shubman Gill
- Virat Kohli
- Shreyas Iyer
- KL Rahul (WK)
- Hardik Pandya
- Ravindra Jadeja
- Kuldeep Yadav
- Jasprit Bumrah
- Prasidh Krishna
- Harshit Rana

The major talking point was the absence of [Arshdeep Singh](#), who has been one of India's most reliable white-ball bowlers in recent years.

## Fans React: “Why Drop Arshdeep?”

Social media erupted moments after the playing XI was announced. Many fans felt Arshdeep deserved a place, especially due to his consistency in death overs and ability to swing the new ball.

Common fan reactions included:

- “Arshdeep has been unfairly benched.”
- “Why experiment in such an important series?”
- “This looks like obvious favouritism.”

Supporters argued that Arshdeep’s experience should have been preferred over relatively newer options like Harshit Rana.

## Why Prasidh and Harshit Were Picked

From the team management’s perspective, **Prasidh Krishna** offers extra bounce and pace, while **Harshit Rana** represents India’s next generation of fast bowlers. The selectors appear focused on:

- Building bench strength
- Testing young talent
- Preparing for future ICC tournaments

While the strategy is understandable, fans still questioned the timing of such experiments.

## Match Expectations After the Toss

With India bowling first, the pressure was on the pace attack to justify the selection calls. Early wickets were crucial to keep New Zealand’s total in check.

Key goals for India:

- Strike in the powerplay
- Control the middle overs

- Restrict New Zealand below 270

## Final Thoughts

The [India vs New Zealand 1st ODI 2026](#) started with both excitement and controversy. While winning the toss and bowling first was a smart move, the decision to bench Arshdeep Singh did not sit well with fans. As the series progresses, all eyes will be on how Prasidh Krishna and Harshit Rana perform—and whether Arshdeep makes a comeback in the upcoming matches.