

India look past Kenya

AFP, Durban
Try as they might to avoid it, India can't help having one eye on the World Cup final. Although India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and coach John Wright have warned that Kenya, their unexpected semifinal opponents, cannot be taken lightly in Thursday's day-night encounter here at Kingsmead, both have unintentionally made it clear they expect to be involved in Sunday's climax at the Wanderers.

Zealand captain Wright, when asked about star batsman Sachin Tendulkar's chances of becoming man of the tournament, said: "He's still got two games to play. They are very important innings." And on Monday, Harbhajan had said: "I feel I've still got a big performance in this tournament and hopefully it will happen in the next two games." India have not appeared in a World Cup final since they won the title for the first and only time in 1983 and time will tell if Harbhajan and Wright's words come back to

haunt them. Wright was at pains to point out his team were taking Kenya, the first non-Test nation ever to reach a World Cup semifinal, seriously even though India have already beaten them by six wickets in a Super Six game. Wright said he expected India to go in with the same team that has got them this far even though many feel they will not need seven recognised batsmen against the East Africans' attack. "We don't play a seventh bats-

man for insurance. We just feel it's right for the balance of team. The last time we played Kenya, Dinesh Mongia bowled well," explained Wright. Veteran India paceman Javagal Srinath has been rejuvenated by the presence of youthful left-armers Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra, the trio taking 43 wickets between them at this World Cup. Added to that India's top order have also fired at crucial times with Sachin Tendulkar leading the way with a record 586 runs in the tournament.

Few expected Kenya to come this far, having beaten three Test nations - 1996 champions Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh on the way. In the Obuya brothers, leg-spinner Collins and wicketkeeper Kennedy, Kenya have two players who have made a name for themselves at this tournament. Kenya, coached by former Indian World Cup winner Sandeep Patil, have several players who know what it takes to beat India in a one-day international. The Africans have won two of their 11 one-dayers against India. "For us to win we'll have to play a few notches up and they'll have to play a few notches down," admitted Asif Karim, who was Kenya's skipper when they first beat India at Gwalior in 1998. "I don't think we'll realise what we're in for until we get on the field on Thursday. "There'll be a full house, one billion people in India watching the match, everyone in Kenya and millions around the world." Relatives of the Kenyan team who wanted to be present in Durban for the match, failed to secure visas and were set to stay at home.



PHOTO: INTERNET
KENYA? I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT! Indian maestro Sachin Tendulkar ponders over something during stretching exercises at Durban yesterday.

ROAD TO SEMIS

AFP, Durban
How India and Kenya reached the semifinals of the World Cup:

INDIA	KENYA
Feb 12: beat the Netherlands by 68 runs at Paarl (India 204 in 48.5 overs; S Tendulkar 52; T de Leede 4-35; and the Netherlands 136 in 48.1 overs; D van Bunge 62; J Srinath 4-30)	Feb 12: lost to South Africa by 10 wickets at Potchefstroom (Kenya 140 in 38 overs; R Shah 60; I Klusener 4-16; and South Africa 142-0 in 21.2 overs; H Gibbs 87 not out, G Kirsten 52 not out)
Feb 15: lost to Australia by nine wickets at Centurion (India 125 in 41.4 overs and Australia 128-1 in 22.2 overs)	Feb 15: beat Canada by four wickets in Cape Town (Canada 197 in 49 overs; I Billcliff 71; T

HEAD TO HEAD

India v Kenya

AFP, Durban
Head-to-head record of recent matches between India and Kenya ahead of their day-night World Cup semifinal at Kingsmead here on Thursday:

March 7 2003	India won by 6 wickets	Newlands
Oct 24 2001	India won by 186 runs	Paarl
Oct 17 2001	Kenya won by 70 runs	Port Elizabeth
Oct 12 2001	India won by 10 wickets	Bloemfontein
Oct 3 2000	India won by 8 wickets	Nairobi
Sept 29 1999	India won by 58 runs	Nairobi
May 23 1999	India won by 94 runs	Bristol
May 31 1998	India won by 9 wickets	Calcutta
May 28 1998	Kenya won by 69 runs	Gwalior



John Wright
PHOTO: STAR FILE

Time is Wright

AFP, Durban
India's cricket crazy public, often the scourge of their players, are an inspiration to coach John Wright. "I love the job, I love the passion for cricket in India. The Indian people need, want and deserve a good cricket team, a fighting cricket team," Wright, a former New Zealand captain, said ahead of Thursday's World Cup semifinal against Kenya here. "The way the game is loved universally in India, for someone like myself, as an outsider who loves cricket, it's been an enjoyable, challenging journey. "I tell my friends, 'you must watch cricket in India'. It's one of the great experiences in cricket, to go to India and see what it means." Wright's contract with the Indian team ends after the World Cup, but it is likely to be extended after his side won eight of their nine matches to reach the semifinal. On Monday, off-spinner Harbhajan Singh paid tribute to Wright's influence but the Kiwi downplayed the compliment in typical deadpan fashion. "Players usually say nice things

about current coaches," the 48-year-old said. "But the players have to take the credit. We help where we can. But they do the hard work on the field." However, Wright added: "All of the players are now more aware of the goals and criteria they have to meet during a game. That's been reflected in our fielding and running between the wickets." Under Wright, India have become a close-knit unit and started to shed their reputation for crumbling away from home. "We've had a settled side, so the selectors must take credit for that. I told the players that if we keep winning we'll stick together." Turning to Thursday's match, Wright said India, who beat Kenya by six wickets in their Super Six encounter at Newlands on March 7, would have to be on their guard. "We shouldn't expect to win," Wright warned even though his team are favourites to make the final. "We have to concentrate on our game plans and the result will take care of itself." **SEE PAGE 14**

Quips & Quotes

AFP, Johannesburg
Who's saying what at the World Cup:
"The whole dressing room was surprised. I won't be encouraging any of our batsmen to do it."
Australia captain Ricky Ponting after Adam Gilchrist 'walked' in the semifinal against Sri Lanka.
"It was a good gesture on his part. It is very rare to see batsmen walking off. There are still some gentlemen in the game."
Sri Lanka's Aravinda de Silva who claimed Gilchrist's wicket.
"I would not say the entire batting failed. I would say more the middle or lower order perhaps didn't give us enough runs, that certainly was the case against Australia."
Sri Lanka coach Dav Whatmore looking for reasons why his team failed.
"I just try and chip in with the bat and the ball and field well. It all beats standing in the deep doing nothing."
Australia's Andrew Symonds after his match-winning
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Saurav staying put

AFP, Durban
Saurav Ganguly denied Wednesday reports saying he was going to give up the India captaincy after the World Cup. Ganguly, speaking ahead of Thursday's day-night semifinal against Kenya here, told reporters: "I'm not going to. I've not even thought about it. "It's wrong to read between the lines," Ganguly said in the wake of previous comments the job was giving him grey hair. "I've no intention of giving up the captaincy at any stage." Ganguly expressed sympathy for former Pakistan captain Waqar Younis, sacked on Wednesday in the wake of the team's first round exit at the World Cup, which included a defeat against arch-rivals India. "Once you are in Pakistan cricket you get used to being sacked. I feel sorry for him. He's done well with the side." Kenya are the first non-Test nation ever to reach the last four of a **SEE PAGE 14**



Saurav Ganguly
PHOTO: AFP

Goodbye to De Silva



PHOTO: AFP
IT DIDN'T HAVE TO END LIKE THIS: Sri Lanka's master batsman Aravinda de Silva walks back to the pavilion after being run out against Australia on March 18.

INTERNET, Port Elizabeth
Sri Lanka's World Cup semifinal loss to Australia on Tuesday ended the international cricket career of record-breaking batsman Aravinda de Silva. The team may struggle to replace its most prolific run-maker. The 37-year-old de Silva played 93 Tests and scored a Sri Lankan record 9,284 runs in 308 one-day internationals, the third highest individual tally behind Sachin Tendulkar and Mohammad Azharuddin. He was man-of-the-match in the 1996 World Cup final after hitting a century to lead Sri Lanka to victory over the Australians. With younger batsmen such as Mahela Jayawardene and Russel Arnold failing to match expectations at the World Cup, de Silva's retirement leaves a void that may take a decade to fill. "We will never find another player of his calibre for the next 10 years," said Saadi Thawfeeq, sports editor of Sri Lanka's Daily News. "The nearest player we have to him is Jayawardene and he has been struggling for form. Russel Arnold, too, is not living up to his **SEE PAGE 14**

State of strength

INTERNET, Durban
Following are some key contests in the World Cup second semifinal between India and Kenya at Kingsmead here on Thursday:
OPENERS
India changed their opening combination following the first two group games at the World Cup. Captain Saurav Ganguly believed his partnership with maestro Sachin Tendulkar was not blossoming like he would have wished and therefore elected to drop himself down the order. In came Virender Sehwag, and the rest as they say is history. Although Sehwag has yet to shine, he has supported Tendulkar well. Tendulkar has scored one century this tournament and fallen just short of a couple more on two occasions. The Kenyan pair of Kennedy Otieno and Ravindu Shah proved their pedigree when they put on 75 runs for the first wicket against India in the Super Sixes. Otieno made a creditable 79 while Shah is his side's leading run-scorer with 264. If the pair can come up trumps again, then it will give Kenya the perfect platform to go on and cause a major shock. **Advantage: India**

MIDDLE-ORDER
This pair-up would have been under some debate had the Indian middle-order continued in the same tepid form as they had done in the first few games of their campaign. However, after several kicks up the backside both from team management and the press back in India, the players eventually began to show why collectively they are seen by many as the best batting line-up in world cricket. Should the openers fail, then a fast-improving Rahul Dravid may hold the key to success. The young pair of Yuvraj Singh and Mohammed Kaif are also beginning to nurture a reputation for themselves. Although captain and veteran Steve Tikolo is not Kenya's leading scorer, his influence on the pitch may prove vital. The likes of Thomas Odoyo and Maurice Odumbe stepped in the Super Six match against Zimbabwe they have the temperament to steer their team to victory although India's bowling attack may prove to be too stiff an opposition. **Advantage: India**
ALL-ROUNDERS
Kenya have a number of players who fall into the 'jack of all trades' **SEE PAGE 14**

From spinach to spin

REUTERS, Durban
The most successful leg-spinner at the 2003 World Cup is neither an Australian nor an Indian. Collins Obuya began life as a medium pacer, copied Mushtaq Ahmed's action, picked up tips from Shane Warne and Anil Kumble and works on the family vegetable stall in his spare time. From such unpromising beginnings the Kenyan has emerged as one of the finds of the tournament. The tall 22-year-old, with a looping delivery and capable of sharp turn and significant bounce, made his mark when capturing five for 24, at the time the ninth best analysis in World Cup history, in the shock first-round win over 1996 champions Sri Lanka. He will get another opportunity to impress on Thursday when facing India in the semifinals. An unassuming man from Nairobi, he puts down much to his success to an inquisitive mind and generous offers of help from the spinners' union. He had begun by trying to imitate Pakistan leg-spinner Mushtaq while watching the 1996 World Cup **SEE PAGE 14**



Collins Obuya
PHOTO: STAR FILE