

Wright NZ's new coach

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand installed former Test captain John Wright as Black Caps head coach Monday, handing him the formidable task of lifting the team's woeful form ahead of next year's World Cup.

Outgoing coach Mark Greatbatch paid the price for the Black Caps' run of 11 successive one-day international defeats, with New Zealand Cricket (NZC) hoping Wright can emulate his success in charge of India from 2000-2005.

New Zealand also appointed a three-man independent selection panel, relieving captain Daniel Vettori of selection duties amid fears his dual roles within the team had become too much of a burden.

NZC chief executive Justin Vaughan said the changes followed a comprehensive review after the Black Caps returned from India this month, where they were thrashed 5-0 by the host nation in the one-day series.

That followed a 4-0 one-day drubbing in Bangladesh, the supposed minnows' first clean-sweep against a major team, which New Zealand media described as a new low for cricket in the country.

V-Day tennis underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The Runner Group Victory Day tennis tournament began yesterday at the National Tennis Complex with seven players advancing into the next round in men's singles.

The winners are Rafiqul Islam, Mizanur Rahman, Jacky, Jayen Omar, Hanif Munna, Rustam Ali, Channu Lal.

In U-16 boys' singles, Mamun Bepari, Kawsar Ali and Mohammad Sajal advanced into the second round beating Naimul Islam, Sarwar Anik, and Noor Mohammad respectively.

Cox's Bazar

FROM PAGE 16
General secretary Al Musabbir Sadi after the meeting.

Cox's Bazar, which is now hosting the SAFF Women's Football Championship, will become the sixth venue to be used for the professional league outside Dhaka as Narasingdi, Khulna, Sylhet, Narayanganj and Feni have already hosted matches. And among them only Feni will host the home matches of Feni Soccer Club in the upcoming league.

The fourth edition of the professional football league will get underway on December 27 through the match between champions Abahani and newcomers Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Captain

FROM PAGE 16
the age-old club issue that could be playing a role in the decision-making.

Apparently, Kamal was not happy with the team's success under the leadership of Shakib, who led from the front to clinch a 4-0 series victory over New Zealand, which was followed by a 3-1 success against Zimbabwe in the latest ODI series.

Kamal also came down heavily on the team's performance despite the series victories. "Our batting was not good and bowling too. You can only praise the fielding. We are not satisfied with the performance. We must think about it. Our batting was also not good against New Zealand although we won the series," he said expressing his disappointment.

"There was no consistency in the performance. You can't find any player who was consistent in four games played against Zimbabwe," he added.

Hosts

FROM PAGE 16
Name in this tournament scored the winner in that game.

"The last time we played, I scored the winning goal. This time too, I want to score, but more than one," said Jamuna with an apparent air of conviction.

Having completed their warm-up early in the morning, the relaxed Nepalese players watched the India versus Pakistan match with intent, contemplating their strategies seemingly a game in advance.

And a few hours later, a couple of their players were spotted buying gifts at a shop for their families back home.



KNOCKOUT BLOW: South Africa speedster Dale Steyn (R) celebrates the last Indian wicket on the fifth morning of the first Test against India at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday.

Proteas power into lead

Cricket

AFP, Centurion

Fast bowlers Morne Morkel and Dale Steyn took a wicket apiece as South Africa completed victory by an innings and 25 runs on the fifth day of the first Test against India at SuperSport Park on Monday.

Sachin Tendulkar was left stranded on 111 not out as India were bowled out for 459, losing their last two wickets for five runs in 26 minutes and 35 balls.

Morkel had Shanthakumaran Sreesanth caught at third slip before Steyn had last man Jaidev Unadkat caught at gully to give South Africa a 1-0 lead in the three-match series against the team ranked number one in Test cricket.

South Africa were always in control after winning the toss and sending India in to bat after rain delayed the start on the first day.

Morkel and Steyn had ripped through India's batting on a lively pitch, dismissing the world's number one ranked Test team for 136 in their first innings.

Taking full advantage of improved batting conditions, South Africa piled up 620 for four declared, with Jacques Kallis hitting a maiden Test double century and AB de Villiers racing to South Africa's fastest Test century.

Faced with a first innings deficit of 484, India put up a much-improved performance in the second innings to give them heart going into

the remaining two matches of the series, in Durban and Cape Town.

Opens Gautam Gambhir and Virender Sehwag both made half-centuries before Tendulkar and captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni put on 172 for the seventh wicket to ensure that the match would extend into a fifth day.

Tendulkar went on to record his 50th test century.

India resumed at 454 for eight, still trailing by 30 runs.

Morkel struck with the 21st ball of the day when Sreesanth edged a lifting delivery to AB de Villiers at third slip.

Unadkat could only fend a lifting ball from Steyn to gully where Ashwell Prince completed a simple catch.

The second Test starts in Durban on Sunday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 136 (Tendulkar 36, Dhoni 33, Harbhajan 27; Morkel 5-20, Steyn 3-34, Kallis 1-20)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 620 for 4 declared (Kallis 201 not out, Amla 140, De Villiers 129, Petersen 77; Sharma 2-120, Singh 2-169)

INDIA: Second innings 459 (Gambhir 80, Sehwag 63, Dravid 43, Sharma 23, Tendulkar 111 not out, Dhoni 90; Steyn 4-105, Harris 2-88, Morkel 2-94)

Result: South Africa won by an innings and 25 runs and took 1-0 lead in three-Test series.

Man-of-the-match: Jacques Kallis.

'Deficit was too much'

Cricket

AGENCIES, Centurion

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni said the first innings deficit was too much to handle and a defeat was inevitable after the visitors conceded a massive 484-run lead to South Africa in the first Test.

"The deficit was too much to handle, and South Africa got too many runs. It was a good show by the batsmen in the second innings," Dhoni said after India were dismissed for 459 in their second innings to hand South Africa an innings and 25-run victory.

"After they won the toss it was a job half done, but they had to bowl at the right areas and they did that. Their batsmen also batted really well," he added.

Asked what are the positives that India would take from this match, Dhoni said, "Most of the batsmen got off to a good start in the second innings, I mean Gauti [Gautam Gambhir] scored 80, Sachin [Tendulkar] 100, these are positives."

"But there are grey areas. Our bowling has to improve, and we are looking forward to have Zaheer [Khan] back in the side. It is important to educate the bowlers and give them a road map for the next Test. I've lost quite a few tosses, but it's important now to take some time off and then get back into the groove," he added.

South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis, who was awarded the Man of the Match for his maiden unbeaten double ton in the first innings, said it was a very special moment for him.

"It took a long way to come but it was worth the wait. It was a very special moment," Kallis said.

"It was a good all-round effort from us, we put in a good performance on day one which put us ahead of the eight ball. Centurion is a big scoring ground and we came into this Test looking to be very positive with both bat and ball," he said.

Highly satisfied after drawing the first blood in the high profile series, South African skipper Graeme Smith heaped praise on his team and said the aim now would be to make it 2-0 in Durban.

"Obviously very happy, it's a big series, the build-up has been big and it's nice to come out and secure a big win," Smith said.

"The bowlers did very well and bowled in the right areas on the first day. We wanted to be positive in our first innings, and to take the game forward like that. The way the batsmen played, it was great Test cricket. We've had terrific support from the fans, looking forward to Christmas with our families. We have to continue in the same vein and make it 2-0 in Durban Test, that would be the aim," he said.

Spinner Paul Harris and pacer Morne Morkel were also awarded with a memento for achieving 100 wickets in their Test career in the post-match presentation.

Sachin & Vaas far ahead

FROM PAGE 16

Indian great Sachin Tendulkar headed the run charts with 673 runs (one 100, six 50s) from eleven games and astonishingly, was 208 runs clear of his captain Sourav Ganguly at second place.

Tendulkar's 75-ball 98 in India's victory against arch-rivals Pakistan at Centurion was vintage, devastating an attack that included the two Ws and Shoaib Akhtar.

Bizarrely, the highest score of the tournament belonged to Zimbabwean Craig Wishart who stroked an unbeaten 172 against Namibia at Harare.

The canny Sri Lankan swing bowler Chaminda Vaas led the wicket charts with 23 wickets from only ten games, creating a new Cup record for most wickets. He also accomplished the unprecedented feat of taking a hat-trick off the first three balls of a match against Bangladesh at

Pietermaritzburg. He took a wicket off the fifth ball of the over to make it four in the first over of the match, which was also a first.

McGrath, who was third in the bowling charts, boasted the tournament-best bowling analysis of seven for 15 against Namibia at Potchefstroom.

With 21 dismissals, Australian Adam Gilchrist was the top wicketkeeper of the World Cup.

India hails Tendulkar

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India on Monday celebrated the record-breaking feats of Sachin Tendulkar after the champion batsman scored an unprecedented 50th Test century.

President Pratibha Patil and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh led the glowing tributes even as India faced almost certain defeat in the first cricket Test against South Africa at Centurion.

Tendulkar was unbeaten on 107 as India ended day four still 30 runs behind with two second innings wickets in hand and hoping the predicted rain on Tuesday would save them the match.

But Indians back home appeared little concerned by the team's precarious position in the Test, confirming the widely held belief that defeat did not matter as long as Tendulkar scored a century.

The 37-year-old is the most prolific batsman in history with a record 46 one-day hundreds to go with his 50 Test centuries since he entered the international

arena back in 1989.

"It is an amazing achievement to play for the country for over two decades and still continue to be the team's anchor," Prime Minister Singh said.

"Sachin makes all of us so very proud."

The 50-ton feat was flashed on the front pages of leading newspapers and television channels rounded up past and present cricketers to speak on the batsman they compared to the legendary Don Bradman of Australia.

"Don of a new era" screamed the front page of the Times of India, which devoted three pages to the master's achievements under catchy headlines like "Batman Forever" and "Sachincredible".

"Legend, 50 times over", the Hindustan Times wrote on its front page, while the Indian Express headlined its story "Sachin cricket enters 51st century".

Tendulkar's consistency over a 21-year period earned high praise with former captain Sourav Ganguly calling him the "best batsman ever" ahead of the late Bradman, who retired in 1948 with a Test batting average of 99.94.

"It's an unbelievable achievement by an unbelievable cricketer," Ganguly said,

adding that the man now dubbed 'Ton'dulkar by the media could still be playing beyond 40.

"Believe me, age is not a factor in this game till you are 40. He is not finished yet by any means. Cricket remains his passion."

India's South African coach Gary Kirsten, who played against Tendulkar in the 1990s, admired the batsman's commitment to the sport.

"The key to his success is his approach to the game, his humility to learn and try to do better all the time," Kirsten was quoted as saying by Indian media at Centurion.

"For him, a Test match begins two days earlier, preparing for it. He wants to face the maximum number of balls at the nets. You will not see him play a loose shot at the nets.

"He is focused all the time, he wants to do better all the time," said Kirsten.

Tendulkar has scored seven Test centuries this year, during which he also notched up the first double-century in the history of one-day cricket.

"It's been a phenomenal year for him," said Kirsten. "I think he is playing better than ever."

Sachin hungry as ever

Cricket

AFP, Centurion

When Sachin Tendulkar started his Test career 21 years ago he was a wide-eyed 16-year-old who had to face up to a world-class Pakistan bowling line-up which included Imran Khan, Wasim Akram, Abdul Qadir and a young Waqar Younis.

He made two half-centuries for India in the four-match series and a star was born.

"It was challenging. I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and learned a lot," he said.

On Sunday, Tendulkar rose to yet another challenge as he tamed the two fast bowlers currently rated as the best new-ball pair in the world, South Africa's Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel, who were aged six and five when Tendulkar first showed that he had the skill and determination to succeed at cricket's highest level.

His innings of 107 not out on the fourth day of the first Test at SuperSport Park was a typically masterly effort, which restored Indian pride after the touring side had

been outclassed in the first innings.

It also made him the first player in the history of the game to hit 50 centuries in Test matches. No other batsman has scored more than 39.

Tendulkar, 37, dedicated the innings to his late father, Ramesh.

"It was his birthday yesterday so I dedicate it to him. The first thing I thought of (on reaching the century) was him."

The Indian batting maestro said he was happy but not ecstatic.

"It's nice. I can't say I'm not happy. I'm not... I don't know how to express this. I'm happy and it is good that it has come. Hopefully it doesn't stop here."

Tendulkar is far and away the most successful batsman in the game. He has also hit a record 46 centuries in one-day internationals.

He said records on their own were not what drove him.

"I play for the love of the game. If I were chasing records I wouldn't have missed the one-day matches [against New Zealand recently]. I have to pace myself carefully and I was not in top physical condition."

India roar into final

SPORTS REPORTER

India eased into the final of the SAFF Women's Football Championship with an comprehensive 8-0 victory over Pakistan in the first semifinal yesterday.

Bala Devi's first-half hat-trick, a brace from Gayatri Mallik and one apiece for Sasmita Mallik, Mandakini Devi and Manpreet Kaur earned the predictable outcome in front of a moderate crowd at the Cox's Bazaar Stadium.

Just like the previous match, India started the game with a few of their key players on the bench. And once they raced to a 7-0 lead in the first half, took off their two most potent strikers. The second half yielded only one goal as the Indians decided to test their bench strength.

A satisfied India coach Shahid Jabbar said winning was important, not the margin while the losing coach of Pakistan Tariq Lutfi contented himself by saying that the semifinal berth was a target fulfilled for them and this tournament was a good learning experience for his side.



An India striker (L) attempts to dodge a Pakistani defender during her side's 8-0 semifinal win in the SAFF Women's Football Championship at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

Woman boxers V-Day meet attraction

SPORTS REPORTER

Woman boxers were the highlights of the daylong Victory Day boxing competition held at the Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday.

Women competing in cricket, football, handball, swimming, athletics, shooting, kabaddi, judo, taekwondo and wushu have become a common scene these days, but fighting it out in the boxing ring is something new for them. Merely two months ago, four woman boxers, all from Bangladesh Ansar, made debut by taking part in the 26th National Boxing Championship. But the number is on the rise as six boxers participated in this Victory Day event. Interestingly, four are new faces.

The boxers played among themselves in three categories amid huge applause from some 100 spectators, most of them were participants.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Height of fashion? 4 Author Stoker 8 Earthenware pot 12 "The Greatest" 13 Tiny bit 14 Tire (out) 15 Church VIP 17 Relaxation 18 Big bothers 19 Draw conclusions 20 The fifth element 22 Portend 24 First victim 25 Reeve role 29 Parcel of land 30 Paycheck extra

DOWN

1 Overactor 2 Yale student towers 4 Plain figure? 5 Deteriorates 6 Packed away 7 Scratch 8 First game 9 Goldbrick 10 Come in last 11 Mimic 16 Pedestal occupant 19 Mid-month date 20 Hairless Solution time: 25 mins.

21 Reed instrument 22 Batter's tactics 23 Piece of work 25 Aching 26 Labyrinth beast 27 Desert-like 28 Profits 30 Existed 33 Gunk 34 Speak unclearly 36 Kasparov's game 37 Prepare a casserole 38 Satan's specialty 39 Traps 40 Uppity one 42 "Two and a Half —" 43 Playwright Levin 44 Baton Rouge sch. 45 Droop

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CRYPTOQUIP

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K Z E G I R K P O , P V F N I H
A Z I I P O A N O - Z S H - O U P R H .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE A BUNCH OF ELKS WERE FORCIBLY TAKEN BY THE FELON, I WOULD SAY THEY WERE COMMAN-DEERED.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals O